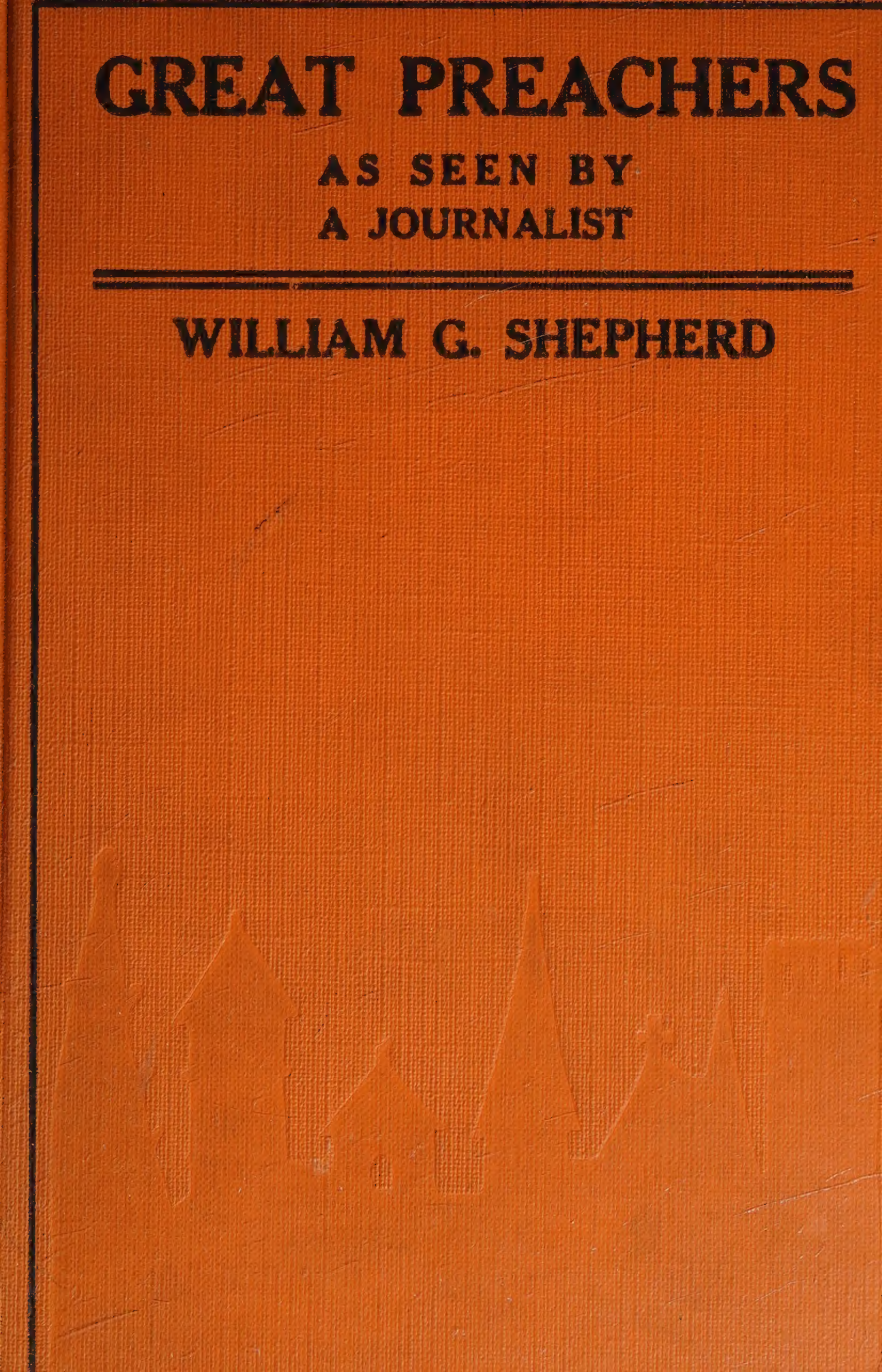
GREAT PREACHERS

AS SEEN BY A JOURNALIST

WILLIAM G. SHEPHERD



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Great Preachers
As Seen By a Journalist

By
WILLIAM G. SHEPHERD
Author of "The Scar That Tripled," Etc.

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To My Mother

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Foreword

BY profession the author is a reporter. His work has constantly appeared in American magazines of all types. It was because of his reportorial experiences and his knack, perhaps, of being able to observe and analyse American institutions, that he was requested by Rae D. Henkle, the editor of *The Christian Herald,* to meet and interview eleven of the leading clergymen of the United States.

These clergymen were selected both for their great reputations as preachers and for the power of their influence in their various denominations. They were also carefully selected for the variety of their positions and tasks in American Protestantism. No two of these men, it will be observed, fill exactly the same niche in the work of the churches of this country. Indeed, each man seems, more or less, to have carved out for himself, his own niche, to have found certain peculiar duties for which, by temperament and character, he was best fitted.

Each man, more or less, has made his own job.

It is true, of course, that these eleven men do

not constitute the eleven greatest clergymen in the United States. It is possible perhaps that another eleven might have been selected, or even a third eleven, that might have numbered great and eminent ministers. The purpose of the selection was to find eleven leading preachers who, in their work, their purposes, their beliefs and their influence, might show America a fair cross-section of pulpit-life and pulpit-work in this country.

These eleven men, however, are not average clergymen. They are all men of distinctive power and leadership. Some of them studied at several universities. Two were at Yale, two at Columbia, one at the University of Chicago, and one at the University of London. Three were students of the Boston University; two of Wesleyan University, in Ohio; one each at Syracuse University, Mercer University, of Georgia; Wesleyan University, Connecticut; Amherst, Kenyon and Midland Colleges.

Only half of the group, however, attended theological schools. They went into the pulpit at the average age of twenty-eight years. At the time of writing they had served an average of thirty-two years in the pulpit.

How many millions of hearers and readers these men have reached cannot easily be computed. It is amazing to discover that these

eleven men have written one hundred and twenty books, an average of a full dozen volumes for each man.

Every man of them has been a church builder. The architecture of great cities like New York, Philadelphia and Chicago has been graced by the life-work of these men and in smaller cities there stand a full score of churches that have been built by these great preachers.

It isn't a small thing to be a preacher, when you consider such preachers as these. Their influence on the life about them may be silent but it is incalculable.

No man on the street, in America, who looks into the work and activities of American clergymen as this secular writer and reporter has looked into the work of this handful of men can say truthfully that clergymen do not play a powerful influence in American life.

W. G. S.

New York, N. Y.

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I

DAVID JAMES BURRELL

A CHAMPION FOR CHRIST

IT is science that is playing havoc with what is called the old-time religion. As I talked with the various clergymen who are mentioned in this book I discovered that the struggle between the fundamentalists and the modernists is a struggle over the question of whether or not theology shall recognise the discoveries and theories of science.

"Theology can, and ought to be, adapted to present-day science," say the modernists.

"Present-day science, with its theories—particularly with its theory of evolution—ought not to be recognised by theology," say the fundamentalists.

David James Burrell I found to be a rock-like fundamentalist. He is aggressively against any attempt to adjust theology or religion to the discoveries or theories of science. To him Christianity needs no explaining nor modification.

He takes the Bible as a supernatural, Divine revelation to men; he is as sound a representative of the fundamentalist school as I encountered.

I

DAVID JAMES BURRELL

A BROKEN, filthy, drunkard of a man found his way into the study of one of the country's greatest churches, a magnificent pile of stone that stands in Fifth Avenue, at the corner of Twenty-ninth Street, in the city of New York. Life had befuddled him, but one thing was clear in his hazy mind. It was that in this rich and stately church there was a man who could help him. He had known this man a third of a century before, in better days.

The two men came together—the pastor of the great church and the broken man. Their first conversation ran about like this:

"I'm just as you see me," said the broken one.

"You need help," said the other. He gave the man money for food and clothes and then he heard the story of the wrecked life.

The next Sunday the wrecked man sat in a far-away seat in the great church. He was with the crowd that came to hear the preacher's

sermon that day. On later Sundays he came early to get a seat that would bring him near to the great preacher.

For six months, so the preacher has told me, this man sat below him, with upraised face, listening to every word, and, at the end of that time, the man came into his study and said: "Dr. Burrell, I want to take the communion and join your church."

And within a few weeks the once broken man took part in the communion and stood before the congregation to be admitted to membership in the famous and rich old Marble Collegiate Reformed Church.

And then—the man disappeared. The preacher and many members of the congregation missed him, but he never walked those aisles again.

Two years later Dr. Burrell received a telephone call in his Fifth Avenue study from the Hadley Rescue Hall in the Bowery.

"Dr. Burrell," said John Callahan, the head of the famous Mission, "can't you come down here this evening and conduct a funeral? The man who is dead said he knew you very well."

When Dr. Burrell entered the Mission that evening its seats were filled. Before the plat-

form stood a casket and as Dr. Burrell looked at the face, he exclaimed to John Callahan: "Billy! What's he been up to, John? How did you find him? How did he come down here to the Mission?"

"He came down here with his face shining," answered Callahan. "We didn't find him. He found us. Billy isn't one of those picked off the streets. The night after you took him into your church he came here, and he's been here ever since. He patrolled the water-front to find down-and-out men. And he found them. They'll tell us about it themselves, this evening."

The greater part of the funeral service consisted of the tributes of men whose paths had crossed Billy's. He seemed to have left a blessing wherever he moved. The landlady in the water-front boarding-house where Billy had lived stood up with her beaming face covered with tears.

"He taught God to me and to every man in the house. My house became full of Christians after Billy came there."

That old boarding-house on the water-front! It must have been one of the happiest places in the big city. Billy had brought God to it, and out of it nightly went Billy, the landlady and the boarders to hunt for broken men and show

them how they might become whole again. Man after man arose in the audience and with happy but streaming face told of what Billy, the longshoreman, had done for him. Billy had earned his daily bread beside them and all around him, as he worked, there had been a circle of song and happiness and prayer; he had held up a cross before them.

The great preacher sat there in the Mission with his head bowed. The motto of this preacher's life had been the words of Christ: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

And Billy, on the water-front, had followed the example of the pastor in the stately church on Fifth Avenue.

"In all my life," Dr. Burrell told me recently, "I have never asked a man or woman to come to church or to join the church. I have stood on my platform and told the truth to all who came. I held Him before them, because I knew that power came from Him, not from me."

We Americans like rock-like men. They are our really great men. They are men who stand solidly. Waves do not overturn them. Indeed, such men are the makers of waves; the tides that beat against them break away from their sides into great waves that end in roaring surf on the other side of the earth. We like rock-

like men in science, in finance, in politics, in discovery and in business.

David James Burrell is a rock-like man in the Christianity of America. He reminded me of a great stone, set in a certain place, to hold a great burden. His square, chiseled face, his broad shoulders and his medium stature gave me a sense of his solidity; the grayness that comes of his eighty years gave me an impression of the hoariness that settles, through centuries, on an immovable stone.

And yet, as we talked he told me that he was a religious fanatic.

"I don't believe in taking Christianity halfway," he said to me. "If Christianity is not good for every day in the year and for every minute in the day; if it isn't good in business as well as in church; if it doesn't make a burdened man or woman happier and hopeful and a business man honest and clean-conscienced, then I don't want anything more to do with it. But it does. I know it does. For over half a century I have proved that it does.

"Christ? How can any one analyse Him? He was the Son of the living God. I have taken Him for that. I preach Him as that. He was supernatural. He was beyond our reason and our brains. Only faith can reach Him.

You can tell everybody that that is what I believe and I believe in it with all my might. I am against all this present-day explanation of Christ. He can't be explained, except by the fact that He was the Son of God.

"Do you remember the policemen who were sent out to arrest Him? They walked out from the court bravely enough. But they came back into the court without their prisoner. Their report was the strangest police report ever made in any city in the world. All they had to say was: "Never man spake like this man." "No, sir!" said the gray-haired preacher, "He can not be analysed or explained by human beings. He was the Son of God."

And then he continued:

"Why, we only have a few words of His sermons. They were very short sermons. And yet they touched on every problem of human life. His words set the world to thinking and His sermons marked an epoch in human history. And some try to tell us that He was only a man."

There you have, in this great pastor's words, what he believes. He is for the old faith; the new ideas that would sweep it away do not move him.

In that great church on Fifth Avenue, when he came to it, thirty years ago, were millions in

wealth and property but only one hundred and fifteen members and less than ten prayer-meeting attendants. Now great congregations gather every Sunday to hear Dr. David James Burrell tell simply of the old faith.

"Did this rock of a Burrell ever move with the waves?" I asked myself, as he spoke.

He did. He was a shifting sandpile, once. He told me all about it.

"When I was graduated from Yale," he said, "and went to my home in Illinois where my parents had raised me in the Indian days, my mother met me at the gate and threw her arms around me and cried with joy and said, 'Now, David, you'll go into the ministry, won't you?'

"I couldn't answer her. I told her I would go to a theological seminary and see what they had to give me. In the university I had lost all the religion she had taught me. I had forgotten how to pray. I couldn't believe in the divinity of Christ. I hadn't any belief. But I went off to the seminary. I couldn't get anything there; it was all dogma and theory. There was no living Christ in it, that I could reach. To keep myself going I took charge of a boys' mission class near Washington Square in New York City. I told them how to keep clean, how to save their money; I told them

they must not steal, that they must try to be good citizens. But I couldn't tell them anything about Christ. I couldn't even pray with them.

"One night a boy came to my room and told me his father was dying. 'Won't you come with me?' he asked. I had to go. I had never seen a man die; I had never been at a death-bed. I had no comfort to give to a dying man, but I *had* to go. In a tiny, dirty room of a tenement in the near-by slums the boy showed me his father, lying on a ragged bed. Then began a night of lies.

"'Are you a parson?" asked the man.

"I had to lie and tell him I was," said Dr. Burrell. "I couldn't see anything else to do.

"'Very well,' said the man. 'I'm a Scotchman. I was raised in the Kirk of Scotland. I know just as much about the Bible as any parson. But I'm dying and I want you to tell me that the Bible is true, before I die. I want you to tell me that I can believe in every word of it and that all my old mother taught me was right.'

"And then he asked me if I believed in the Bible. I had to lie again. I told him I did. I told him I believed that Christ was Divine. I told him I believed in every word in the Bible.

"And then he quoted verses to me. 'Do you believe that, parson?' he would ask me. And I would have to answer yes. 'Well, make *me* believe it then,' he would say. And I, not believing it at all, would do my best to help him believe it. Verse after verse he quoted to me. Now and then he would say, 'I'm slippin' away, parson. I want you to make me believe. I've wrecked everything around me in my life, and myself, too, because I couldn't believe.'

"We talked and talked and talked," Dr. Burrell went on, "while the boy listened. The man's eyes began to glaze. It was a terrible night; the most terrible of my life. About four o'clock in the morning, when the early noises of the city began to enter the room, he said to me, 'Parson, I'm slippin' away fast. Can't you make me believe?'

"I tried to talk to him again and finally he said, 'Parson, come over here to my bed and pray for me. I'm almost gone.'

"I knelt down at his bed and I prayed and prayed. I tried to talk to God on that dying man's behalf. And while I prayed the man died."

It was then and there, in that room, that David James Burrell's life took the turn that led him to a position of power and authority in American Protestantism.

The ring of Dr. Burrell's voice as he told me of the decision he made in that tenement-room, at the bedside of the dead man who had tried so hard to believe, I'll remember through life.

"I decided then and there," he said, "that *I would* believe. I resolved to take the Bible, word for word, without any questioning, and put my faith in every word. I determined to become a fanatic for Christ. And I have been a fanatic ever since."

He tossed away dogma and ecclesiasticism. He and his wife went into the slums of Chicago and started a city mission. She played a street organ and sang while he preached before the crowds, a "fanatic for Christ." It was a far cry, his street mission, from the grand pulpit that a graduate of Yale might have hoped to fill. It was into a strange life that his bride of a year followed him. For four years they worked together on the streets of Chicago. For forty-eight years they lived side by side until she died.

At his ordination, when certain of the sage ministers of the sort who thought they had "explained Christ," began to ask Burrell technical and dogmatic questions he had arisen from his chair and started to leave the room. He had said to them all, "I don't have to be

here answering questions. If this is what ordination means, I'm through with it."

Only a white-haired old clergyman, who had been the young man's friend through his wandering years, prevented him from leaving the room. I know from facts that when Dr. Burrell finally entered the Church, the Church came to him and took him, with all his " fanaticism for Christ " and with all his belligerency against men, scientists or preachers, who attempted to " explain Christ." He went first to the Second Presbyterian church in Dubuque, Iowa, and remained there eleven years, a power in religious and civil life. Westminster Church, of Minneapolis, then called him, in 1891. In the mighty surging growth of that Western city Dr. Burrell and his church kept well abreast; the congregation numbered two thousand. His church was always overflowing.

And then New York called him—the old Marble Collegiate Church, part of the oldest Protestant church on the American continent with a continuous history.

" I don't want to go," he told his callers. They asked him to meet the official board and he finally agreed.

In the board meeting he said, " I'd rather be in Minneapolis. Tell me whether I'll be free here to do as I wish? "

There was a hemming and a hawing among some of the elder men.

One man said, "We have some sweet and ancient customs in our dear old church. We hope you won't suggest overturning them."

That was the time for the man from the West, the "fanatic for Christ," to speak.

"For over a hundred years," he answered, "you have had these sweet old customs. And see where they have brought your church. If I come here I shall have to overturn everything; I must do as I see best."

And so that dignified old New York church board took him on his own terms. That year they spent twenty-five thousand dollars on the church to prepare it. Out went the old pulpit and in its place came a great platform. The sacred rights of family pew-owners were knocked into a cocked hat. If owners didn't fill their rented pews then some one else—common folks from the highways and byways of the city —might fill them.

New life came into the old church and it has been there for thirty years now. Hundreds of thousands of people in that church, have seen Christ lifted up on that platform; but never one single word, attempting to "explain" Christ, has ever gone out from that platform. Many sermons preached by Dr. Burrell are printed

and go through the mails to thousands. Dr. Burrell has written forty books up to now. In every book there is his "fanaticism for Christ." He is a member of over thirty boards of various sorts in New York; he is a massive figure in the civic life of the city.

When a man among men such as David James Burrell slams his square hand down on the Bible and says, "I believe in this Book from cover to cover and I stand by every word in it because it teaches all men how to live," you walk from his study out into Fifth Avenue and into the busy streets of the great city, feeling, in your heart of hearts, that if Christ had been human, like these passing things, men would have forgotten Him centuries ago.

Perhaps the old Scotchman died unbelieving in that tenement room, half a century ago. But if I were dying I would rather have beside me the gnarled old "fanatic for Christ," Burrell, than all the clerical savants that have ever written or spoken in America in attempts to "explain Christ."

Whether the preachers of America know it or not, we men of the street for whom I speak —the women of the homes—we Americans— want a Christ who is Divine. And when a preacher cannot point us toward a Divine Christ and beliefs to which we can anchor, his

church is empty, and all the other little things he may have to offer to us will not fill it. And this is truer today than it ever was before; we have come almost to the tag end of the "other little things."

That's what talking to Burrell makes you feel and *know*.

II

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

A PREACHER WHO REACHES THE HEART THROUGH THE BRAIN

YOUNG men and women who go through our universities and are able to hold on to their religion are, I am persuaded, marked exceptions to a rule. This rule would seem to run as follows: "In the university you lose your religion; if you get it back again you do so after you have left the university and have gone out into the world again."

It was almost a common experience with the eleven clergymen with whom I talked; in school, as Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick expressed it, every man, more or less, "lost the grip on the spiritual part" of himself. The late Bishop Charles David Williams said laughingly, of his experience at school, "Oh, yes! I had the usual dose of spiritual measles in my science classes."

"Spiritual measles" is a common school disease. These clergymen survived it. But their general experience suggests this question: How many spiritual casualties are there in the laboratories and class rooms of our universities? When cold knowledge and exact science crush the emotions, spiritual life may cease. It seemed to me, as an onlooking reporter, that there might well be a big place in the church for a man like Fosdick, who lays tremendous emphasis on the intellectual appeal of religion.

II

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

IF I were a boy in an American college or university who felt his mother's religion slipping away from him; if I, in the light of much learning, got to wondering if all the "Now I lay me's" she had heard me say at her knee had been said into unhearing space; if I were puzzled as to whether the good Lord to whom she used to kneel in my behalf, was only a myth and not a God of power; if all the shore-lights that she had pointed out to me in my days of childhood had begun to grow dim to me and show promise of fading out of my sight; if the anchor of my mother's belief to which I had in simpler days fastened my faith, seemed, to my mind, to be dragging in the sea-flow of life; if my religious emotions, so vivid in younger days, seemed dead within me, and if my mind, now trained to analysis and logic, kept picking away ruthlessly at the "Rock of Ages," and bringing me reports that the "Rock" was only a vision and not a refuge in a storm of life, I should seek out, if I could,

some man who could restore my belief, not by appealing to my emotions but to my intelligence and brain. And if I came upon such a man as Harry Emerson Fosdick, I would sit at his feet and listen.

I say that I would do this under such circumstances because young men, so puzzled, *do* sit at the feet of this preacher of New York and under his guidance they *do* find all the faith of the old days coming back to them, oftentimes stronger than ever, because of the very mental testing which this faith has had.

Up and down the long front of Christianity the roughest spot on the firing-line, perhaps, is in our universities and colleges. As Dr. Fosdick said to me in the course of a conversation: "It is need that brings us to religion for help. Sin and its consequences create a need. Tragedy, like sickness, invalidism or death, creates a need. Mental suffering, growing, perhaps, out of the loss of old ideals and faiths, creates a need. This mental suffering may be as acute and as terrible as any pain that man may ever be called upon to endure. The need it creates can be met by the Christian religion as definitely as any other need."

It is easy to draw a simple picture that makes this puzzled youth stand out before us in all his pathos. A man who has tasted all the dregs of

life, battered and broken, has a desperate physical as well as spiritual need for religious faith; no mental questions stand in his way. Behind him is a life utterly broken; before him, unless he can summon his faith, is indescribable tragedy. The very ghastliness of his plight is his aid.

Men and women, fathers and mothers, facing problems of life, seemingly too great to bear, have needs so definite and apparently so overwhelming that the invitation to consider asking aid of a Helper comes like a great relief.

But tragedy lies in our universities and colleges today in the minds of youths who, because of their very training, find themselves facing life with a disappearing faith in the religion of their fathers. Their mental need is as great as the physical need of the "down-and-outer" on the streets of our great cities or the almost helpless distracted fathers and mothers in American homes besieged by poverty, sin or tragedy.

To aid the "down-and-outer" there are the Rescue Missions like the Bowery Mission and other famous missions in America. To bring faith into besieged homes, there is the pastor of the community church, who must himself, if he can be of any aid, have followed, or even be in the very act of following, the very

trail of trial which the family folks of his community are treading.

Talk as you will about sermons and practical advice, we folks in our religious besetments listen only to the man who knows what he's talking about.

And so I asked Dr. Fosdick, special friend to those whose intellectuality stands in the way of faith, to tell me how he, personally, had won his commission of missionary to these bewildered people.

He smiled, happily, confidentially. I've seen the same smile on the face of Brother Perkins, at Red Rock Methodist Camp meeting, as he shouted to the little group of the faithful at the Sunday morning "love feast" that old-time refrain: "The old-time religion is good enough for me."

"When I was seven years old," he told me, sitting in his office in the famous old First Presbyterian Church at Fifth Avenue and Eleventh Street, New York, "I was converted."

"Old-fashioned conversion?" I asked. Somehow, from what I had heard of him, both criticism and praise, I had not expected to hear him speak in the old-fashioned terms. I had approached him knowing full well that he holds a chair in the Union Theological Seminary in New York, and that battles of theology and

ecclesiasticism are continually surging round him while he swings a dangerous fist. It's true —a "new-fangled religion" was what I had expected from him—him with that silk-hatted congregation in Fifth Avenue—him with his hand in modern new-fangled uplift movements, him with his established reputation in the intellectual, social and business world of the cosmopolis for possessing as choice a set of easy-running, clear-cutting brains as any man can have.

"Yes, sir!" he answered. "Old-fashioned conversion, if you want to call it that, though it isn't old-fashioned at all, and never will be.

"It was a tremendous emotional experience and it has directed my whole life.

"I lived in an intellectual home; my father and mother were devout Christians and I lived a childhood in which not a single doubt entered. My father was a teacher. He is alive today, principal of a high school in Buffalo, New York.

"I intended to be a professional man. I went to Colgate University and then I found myself beginning to doubt all that I had been taught and all that I had experienced in religion.

"It was a terrible thing to feel myself losing the faith I had possessed. Morally, because of

my home-training, I kept on solid ground. I held to my morality, but I lost my grip on the spiritual part of myself."

"And if you had lost your grip morally, as well?" I suggested.

"I would have been gone," he said, simply. "If I had had a moral complication at that time, as well as a spiritual one, I'm afraid, as I look back at it now, that I couldn't have held my own.

"That's the tragedy of the lives of our youth," he said, "losses in moral ground that are hard to regain. Do you know that there never was a man saved in the Jerry McAuley Mission who didn't testify afterwards that he had had 'a good mother'? A good mother and a good home put something into a young man that stays with him through his whole life. He can never get entirely away from it.

"It's so hard in life for a young man who never in his boyhood's home heard of Christ! He has to build himself up from the very bottom.

"Because I was able to hold my moral ground I was able to fight out the battle of faith. I left the hill of my old faith, went down into the valley of doubt and then climbed away up to loftier heights of positive faith on the other side of the valley.

"I couldn't go into the law or any other profession except the ministry.

"There seemed to be a compass within me that turned toward religious faith and religious effort. No matter how I seized the needle, the instant I removed the influence of my will from it, it would always swing back to that same direction.

"Do you know Dwight Moody's story about the child whose hand was caught in the neck of a vase?'

"'I'm caught,' the child said to Moody in a home where he was a guest.

"'I tried my best to get the child free,' Moody used to say, 'but I couldn't. Then I saw that the child's fist was doubled. What have you got in your hand?' asked Moody.

"'A penny,' said the child. 'I dropped it in the vase.'

"'Let go! Let go of it!' said Moody.

"And the child was free in a second.

"So I let go at last my struggle against the ministry, and I have had a great life ever since.

"In my religion I believe in God, manifested in His Son, Jesus Christ. I think that all the other issues that arise between creeds and leaders are, in face of the fact, too small for discussion. Because I will not debate the question

of the Virgin Birth, nor count it important, because I say that any Conception of Christ must have been divine, I am attacked in certain circles as a heretic. What I am trying to teach is not one theory or another of Jesus' earthly origin, but that Christ was the Son of God, come into the world to save sinners. That is the great and one outstanding fact which constitutes the center of the Gospel."

The question I had raised about "old-fashioned conversion" brought this from Dr. Fosdick:

"We may be converted to many things, good and bad. It was upon the convertibility of men that Christ supremely laid His hand. He knew they could be converted to good."

"But conversion, in the 'old-time religion,'" I suggested, "was a matter of the emotions."

"Yes! Yes!" agreed this teacher-preacher. "It is a matter of the emotions almost always. When men and women are in great sorrow and distress their emotions are easy to reach. With many of us the mind does not stand in the way of the emotions, but with the young men in the universities who find their faiths faltering, it is necessary to reach their emotions through a thick fortress of mind, and through the emotions, reach the will power.

"Through the mind to the emotions, and

through the emotions to the will," he repeated, as if to impress upon me a formula.

I haven't written this for or against Fosdick, the preaching pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, from the doors of which crowds are turned away when he preaches. I haven't written it for or against Fosdick, who lectures on "The Modern Use of the Bible" in his chair at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

I went to see him as a man playing a big part in life and in his profession.

Some time after I had talked with him, he amazed America with the boldness of his declaration that he would not join the Presbyterian Church in order to maintain the right to preach from the pulpit of the First Presbyteran Church. But he did only what those who knew him expected him to do. The work of a man like Fosdick is to be done not in one church or one denomination but everywhere, for puzzled youth is everywhere, and tired brains that need help in the struggle toward goodness—where are they not? The crash of the Fosdick incident makes the world stop and look and wonder. But to my mind it is only the noise of the falling of another interdenominational partition.

A Christian missionary in the wilderness of

bleak intellectuality, driving his belief in a Divine Christ through barriers of mind until it penetrates fathoms deep to the thought-burdened human emotions—that's Fosdick to me.

He is forty-two now, round-faced, clear-eyed, ruggedly hewn in features. I tried to picture him at sixty, his shocky hair turned grey, the smoothness of his features marked by lines of ever-growing character that come to the face of every man who meets the problem of life four-square, and fighting.

I wanted to see how he would appear to my boys when they are grown. I hope when they need help they will be able to find a man like him somewhere very nearby.

And he tells me, this man that I had thought a highfaluting college professor, dissector and analyser of religion, more psychologist than prophet, that I must begin to raise now the fortifications of my sons' souls in the heart of our home.

Even I, who went to him as a reporter, got a message from him.

I left Fosdick feeling that he had seen me as a soul; that he sees all men that way.

And that, I submit, is the test.

III

JOHN TIMOTHY STONE

A BUSINESS MAN IN RELIGION

THE American Protestant Church, as a business institution, is more than a billion dollar business. The man who scorns business as a church activity does not know what he is talking about. Forty-two million Americans worship in one-fifth of a million edifices, which have a value, taken with incidental property, of one and two-third billions of dollars.

But—these forty-two million church members, it would seem, have something to do beside attending church. There is work to do. David Lloyd George, the British statesman, said: "Churches ought to be like a searchlight turned on all slums to expose, to shame those in authority to do something. What does poverty mean? It means, men have not enough to purchase the barest necessities of life for themselves and their children. The task our Master came here for was to lift the needy from the mire and the poor from the dunghill, and it is the Christian Church alone, that can accomplish it." There are perhaps fifty-eight million adults to be drawn into the churches. There are about thirty million children in America who have no religious instruction of any sort. Over half of our clergymen receive less than two thousand dollars a year in salaries. There is plenty of business for the Church to carry out, and for this the Church needs business men.

John Timothy Stone, even in the pulpit, has exercised his business talents.

It was a good sign that the Church found room in its midst and a place in which to work, for John Timothy Stone.

III

JOHN TIMOTHY STONE

THE Devil met one of his local subordinates on the street of an American city not long ago and said to him, "Well, how are things getting along in this town?"

"For the first time since I've been stationed here," said the sub-devil, "they're looking pretty badly."

"What's the matter?"

"See that fellow across the street?"

"Yes. What about him?"

"Well, in some way he has got hold of a grain of real, undiluted, concentrated truth. That grain of truth is like a deadly bomb. If he uses it rightly he can blow up our whole business here."

The Devil looked carefully at the man on the opposite sidewalk.

"I'll tell you how to handle him," he said. "You tempt him to take that grain of truth and organise it. Make it the basis of some kind of a society or lodge or club. Then he'll spend his time running the club

and he won't have any time to use the truth against us."

From the latest reports I hear that the man yielded to the temptation and that the Devil's plan is working beautifully. The grain of truth, which is the nucleus of the organisation which he founded, lies in a glass case, unused, in a corner of the gentleman's office in the building which the new organisation erected. Some day the man who found it may take it out and use it; but just now he's too busy taking care of his organisation to do any extra work.

If an organiser isn't a big man, he's lost. An organiser, if he is a little man, puts an institution of some kind together and doesn't care whether the institution achieves anything in the world or not, just so long as he gets the institution built. He is like a man who assembles an automobile, without caring whether it will ever run, just so he gets the parts together; like a man who builds a railroad locomotive and is happy if it can pull itself along the rails, even though it does stand dead still if you hook a freight car to it.

Being an organiser is about as dangerous a job as a man can have. In the business world, in recent months, our leaders in industry have begun to try to tear down some of the organising that has been done in the past decade.

They say there was too much of it; it was done, only too often, by short-visioned men; it brought an inhuman element into industry, and left out the personal element. Effort that should have been spent in production was spent in following organisation rules.

The small-minded organiser is being kicked out of the business world. His motto was: "See how well my organisation *runs*."

The great-minded, far-visioned organiser is being sought everywhere. His motto is: "See what my organisation *accomplishes*."

When you meet an organiser, as I met John Timothy Stone, of Chicago's famous Fourth Presbyterian Church, listen closely to his talk. He'll do one of two things:

(1) Tell you about what he has organised; how smoothly the wheels of his organisations go 'round; how much money it costs to keep them going.

If he talks that way, put him down as a little man.

(2) Tell you what he is accomplishing, and force you to ask him questions about how he does these things; about the tools he uses, the organisations he requires.

If he does that, put him down as that rare, rare man, a good organiser who has cheated the Devil.

There are many photographs that Dr. John Timothy Stone might have on the wall of the den where he studies—photographs of that beautiful group of church buildings along Chicago's beautiful lake drive, known as "The Gold Coast," of the great gymnasium, or the club-rooms or other institutions of his building.

Instead you see the photographs of more than fifty young men and women who have gone out to different parts of the world as teachers or missionaries from the Fourth Presbyterian Church. They are the products of the church. The very first glimpse around his room shows that he emphasises not his organisation, but what his organisation produces.

Dr. Stone is a business man in religion, a practical man. He was born that way. There would be something the matter with any Church that could not find a place within its ranks for every sort of man or woman, as Presbyterianism has found a place for Dr. Stone.

"One night of my life stands out as my deciding time," he told me. "That was the night that I spent in fighting out the question of whether I should go into business or into the ministry. Every professor at Amherst had told me to go into business."

And the professors had the very best of reasons. Here is John Timothy Stone's story:

Behind him on his father's side were five generations of Congregational ministers; on his mother's side he came of a clerical family. He was an only son and had two sisters, and when his father died, when he was eighteen, he tried to quit school to support them. But Dr. A. V. V. Raymond, later President of Union College, then pastor of the family's church at Albany, New York, declared that John *must* go to school. He got four business men in Albany to underwrite John; they backed up his credit. The boy was a leader and Dr. Raymond and the business men knew it.

A few years before John had astonished the pastor of the church, then Dr. Henry Darling, later President of Hamilton College, by requesting that Dr. Darling accept him and five of his boy playmates as members in the church. Dr. Darling had asked him and his comrades to wait six months to prove the strength of their wishes in the matter, and at the end of that time, had found them all unchanged under John's leadership.

John Stone went to Amherst. His instinct for business and for organisation put him at the front immediately. He made as much money, perhaps, in the university as he would have made on the outside.

"I was business manager of lots of things,"

he told me. He went outside of his own college and helped Cornell to arrange its first football schedule. He was elected business manager of the Amherst football team. He made money giving boxing lessons. He received pay as a football coach. He ran special trains to inter-collegiate football and baseball games. He wrote for newspapers and added to his income.

At Auburn Theological Seminary, which he later attended, he established the first gymnasium and got the young theological students all stirred up about sports, including football and baseball.

"Why, I could make more money out of the business end of university sports," he told me, "than I could hope to make out of preaching."

And so the professors who knew John and his talents—who had seen him instinctively organise everything that came in his way—naturally told him to go into business. What they were really telling him, of course, was not to go *out* of business.

When he was graduated he had the offer of a two-thousand-dollar-a-year job in the lumber business. He sat up all night about that job. The young man who did take it became a reputed millionaire.

"But I had preached," Dr. Stone told me, "and I couldn't decide to go into business, or into anything else but the ministry."

And so into the ministry he took his talents of organisation and business and an energy that clicks twenty-four hours a day. At the age of twenty-six years he was the six-foot, upstanding, athletic, clear-headed pastor of the Olivet Presbyterian Church in Utica, New York. After two years he went to Cortland, New York, where he served a pastorate of four years. Utica and Cortland were in his home district in northern New York state.

When he was thirty-two years old the outside world called him. In 1900 he was invited to the pulpit of the famous Brown Memorial Church in Baltimore.

And after that, the national organisation of the Presbyterian Church began to utilise his talents.

At first contact the business side of Dr. Stone is disconcerting. You are speaking with a man of handsome physical aspect, clear-eyed, firm-lipped, hard-headed and outspoken. Coming across him in the business world, in Wall Street, in New York, in the grain exchanges in Chicago or in the shipping business in California, you would know you had encountered a superior business man who was making a suc-

cess of his life, who was master of his environment and who took leadership when it was not readily granted him.

But you will soon discover another man behind this impressive exterior. The question that every great business man asks is, "What do people need?" Real business is the supplying of needs. In going into the ministry, Dr. John Timothy Stone, unwittingly, has never deserted the tenets of business.

"Did you ever have any doubts in your religion?" I asked him toward the end of a long and enlightening interview.

"Oh, yes," he said, laughing. "Plenty of them."

"When?" I asked him.

"Oh, when I was in the university. When I was studying psychology. It seemed to me as if I had lost almost all my religion then."

"And how did you get over your doubts?" I asked.

"Why, when I went out into the world again and saw what people needed and how the religion of Christ filled these needs, all my doubts disappeared."

There was your business man, as we call him, noting the need of men and persuading himself how to fill it.

"A sympathy with men in their problems

and needs"—that is the minister's lodestone, says Dr. Stone.

The Church that he has in mind—and its organisation—will discover the needs of men and women and satisfy them as completely as possible.

The history of the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, since John Timothy Stone's pastorate began there in 1909, illustrates his faculty for probing for human needs. When he went to the church it had five hundred members; they represented the wealth and aristocracy of the city. During the first year he raised $850,000, a stupendous sum in those days—or in any day—for a church collection.

Today that church on the "Gold Coast" of Chicago has a membership of two thousand six hundred. Eighty per cent. of the members are men and women, boys and girls, who work for salaries or wages! Dr. Stone found those who needed the Church most and brought them in.

At every church-service there are more men than women; no other church in the land, perhaps, has such a record for attracting men. Dr. Stone discovered that men needed the Church, and he went out and got them.

The Fourth Presbyterian Church raises two

hundred thousand dollars a year. It doesn't need it all for itself. It takes one hundred thousand for its own purposes and the rest goes for benevolences elsewhere. It wasn't merely a self-maintaining organisation that Dr. Stone built; it was an organisation that would *do something;* that would fill needs.

As an automobile builder he would build cars that could tow other cars.

Dr. Stone's job in the national organisation of his church has been to "unorganise." It's a niche into which he fits exactly. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church discovered, several years ago, that it had sixteen agencies of the Church doing work which could be done better by four agencies.

A committee of fifteen was appointed by the General Assembly to reorganise and consolidate the agencies of the Church and to cut their number down to four. And John Timothy Stone successfully acted as chairman of this committee.

Of all the various kinds of ministers that must necessarily make up the clergy of a Protestant denomination in the United States, John Timothy Stone stands unique.

He is an expert in needs—in the needs of his Church and in the needs of men and women.

"I've never heard him preach a sermon that didn't aim at some particular thing," a Chicago reporter who often "covers" Dr. Stone's sermons told me. "He's no blind-hitter. He's always showing folks how to reach something they need."

That, I submit, is getting down to bed-rock.

IV

BISHOP CHARLES DAVID WILLIAMS

A MAN WHO THOUGHT THE CHURCH WAS NOT A CYCLONE-CELLAR

THE selfish viewpoint, as it is often demonstrated in religion, puzzles the man-on-the-street, the outsider. "Do not pass *me* by!" "Help *me!*"—these same prayers, delivered to the Throne of Grace, are prayed by folk-of-the-world to their fellow-men with the very same desire for personal aid that actuates the man on his knees. And the world is not unkind; it is surprising how often the folk-of-the-world have their prayers answered by their fellowmen.

The powerful part which Bishop Charles David Williams * played was due, it would seem to an onlooker, to his opposition to selfishness in religion. He was an aggressive fighter against this selfishness.

"Sometimes," he told me, as we rode in a taxicab one afternoon through the streets of New York, "when people come to me with their personal spiritual troubles, I feel like being rough with them. I feel like saying: 'Forget your own soul. Quit worrying about yourself for a while. There are many people in worse trouble than you are. Get out into the world and help them. God will take care of your soul.'"

Good firemen, good policemen, good soldiers—they have no right to consider their personal welfare when great tasks are to be done. Duty is uppermost then. It was Bishop Williams' message to the Protestantism of America that a Christian's job is to do something, regardless of consequences to himself. Bishop Williams had foes, here and there, among the very rich; I have heard him called a Radical because of his interest in social and industrial problems. I was not able to discover that he had ever ceased his activities, or regulated them, in order to escape that epithet.

* Bishop Williams died two weeks after the date of this interview.

IV

BISHOP CHARLES DAVID WILLIAMS

THE difference between a clergyman of power, who commands the attention of men, and the other kind, is that the great leader looks *out* from his church into the world while the other kind keeps his religion *within* the church and demands that the world come inside to get it.

This fact I gradually uncovered in my talks with the leading clergymen of the country. Various clergymen draw their strength from the various parts they fill in American Protestantism, but Bishop Charles David Williams, of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Michigan, is one of the leaders in the rapidly spreading belief that a religion locked up within church walls or within the mind and heart of a man or woman isn't the kind that can be of much help to the world.

Any one who sits in long and heart-to-heart conversation with Bishop Williams, as I have done—or who hears him preach from the pulpit

—will get a brand new idea of what the church *ought* to be.

If the sort of a Church which Bishop Williams has in mind could be established among the institutions of the United States, this writer, for one, would no longer worry over hearing the frequent statement, "The Church is fading out of American life."

A Church with its doors always opened, not so much that men and women might enter it, but that the power of Christianity might flow out of it—that's the Church which I discover is the vision of Bishop Williams and other leaders in religious thought today.

The Church is a power-house, not a safety-vault. That's what Bishop Williams tells you. He did not use these words to me, in our conversation; but in his thinking and his planning for the Church of the future you catch that idea as being the chief motive of all his service within the Church.

The church that keeps religion stowed away at the foot of its altar for use as need arises, is limiting its influence. It is doing part of its job, but not all.

This new idea of what Protestant churches *might* be as compared with what they are—an idea which Bishop Williams drives home every time he faces either associates or congregations

—is so new and important and hope-compelling that I've worked it out in my mind into terms of the street, that I could fully grasp.

A power-house may be only a charging station. After the miracle of producing power and storing it within the station had been performed motor cars may come there to have their batteries charged and then go out into the streets again to make use of that power. Or, a power-house may be a great station from which feed-wires run out and distribute power to all parts of a great city so that whoever has need of power has only to raise a trolley pole to the wire or make other connections to receive the benefit of what the great station is sending out.

These are both power stations, but Bishop Williams believes the Church ought to be of the latter kind. And, while he *believes* this, you discover he also *dreams* of even a more efficient station, one that, without wires, throws its power into the very ether so that its influence surrounds men, everywhere, and is right at their hands, ready for constant use.

I am speaking for the man on the street in these chapters and I say truly that the sooner the churches in America become the sort of church that I find Bishop Williams has in mind, the sooner all questions will disappear as to

whether or not the Church is fulfilling its mission in American life. Give us a Church that we can *feel,* out in the streets, a Church that sends out a power that comes to us in our daily lives, and no one needs to worry about how Americans will welcome a Church like that.

Whatever Bishop Williams' position may be within the Church itself—and it is one of power and influence—he is one of the great clergymen of America who serves as a contact between the Church and the man outside of the Church, the man in the factory or mine, the man in the office, the man on the street.

"How many men do you know today," he asked me, "who are asking what life is all about? 'Why? Why? Why?' is a question I hear everywhere. The man who is successful in the world, who has gained everything he thought he wanted, is more likely to ask it than the man who is still struggling. The man who has not yet reached success is often too busy to stop to ask *why* he's toiling and what it's all about. But when he has arrived at what he thought was his goal his mind and soul will be filled with doubts. He will look himself over, take account of himself, and, if he is a thoughtful man, will begin to ask, 'What is this all about? What have I been fighting for?'

"Do you know why men in America reach a

critical stage in their lives at about forty? It is because at about that age they begin to ask, 'Why? What is life about?' That's a question that comes to a man who hasn't developed a faith in spiritual things. Success in life only makes the question more acute.

"Men must believe in something; they must have purposes in life that do not suddenly come to an end, and leave them stranded and questioning. Men everywhere are saying to us, 'Sirs, we would see Jesus.' The man who has a faith in spiritual things never loses his power at forty or at any other age. He never asks what life is about, what his efforts are for or whether they are worth while. That deadly question, 'Why?' does not raise itself in his mind. The spiritual side of him has been developed and he lives a life that has its purpose founded not only on things of this world but of another and spiritual world. When worldly purposes fail him even stronger spiritual purposes work in his life, and he knows, without a doubt, the why of life, what it is all about.

"Men *do* have souls, all men. That is the basis of religion. And men *must* have faith. They *want* to have faith, if they can."

A great American humourist, chatting with friends, was describing a friend who, as he

thought, was spending a lot of time on a useless scheme.

"What he's doing," said the humourist, "is about as useless as scolding a congregation on Sunday morning for not coming to church. The parson who does that is scolding the folks who don't need it because there they are, in church, right in front of him."

As Bishop Williams talked I was reminded of this story.

The kind of religion that Bishop Williams has in mind is a religion that men need out in the world. And out there, in the world, he finds them asking for it, hoping for it, wishing they had it. Is it any wonder, thinking as he does, that his attention is turned outside the church to the unchurched men and women of the United States?

And please, my reader, do not believe that there is not fire in the eye of this man who carries his religion out into the world. You discover very shortly, in contact with Bishop Williams, that he is a fighter. He isn't any mild, gentle bishop wandering dreamingly about the world holding out vague hopes to mankind in mild and uncertain tones. If Christianity were not a compelling power you know, instinctively, that he would have nothing to do with it.

Right outside his church door, as he steps

away from the portals, he knows that he will find something to hit at. And this thing is a very definite thing in his mind. As he talks you hear him name this thing over and over again. It is "Paganism." To turn men from paganism to the philosophy and religion of Jesus Christ is this bishop's definite aim in life. Paganism angers him; he is always seeking for it and its works.

As he told me about the paganism he finds in most of our human institutions, I thought of that kind man who is described in the Bible as having found, by the roadside, a battered stranger who had fallen among thieves. In my mind, as he talked, I put Bishop Williams in the place of the good Samaritan. What would he have done?

He would have helped the fallen man, beyond a doubt; picked him up and given him all the aid he could. And all the time, as he gave the bruised man aid, he would be saying to himself, "Just as soon as I get this fellow on his feet again, I'm going out and hunt up that gang of thieves and have something done about this. This has got to stop."

You discover, as you speak with Bishop Williams, why, in some circles, he is called a Socialist.

He has always hit at what he believes to be

injustice in the business world. As I talked with him about his life dream of having Christianity settle the problems of society, I used the patois of Socialism, the terms, even of Bolshevism—"social injustice," "the rights of the masses," the evils of "profits" and other terms with which most newspaper readers are familiar in these days. He knows these terms by heart, but he has one name for all the known evils of economic life. It is not a name that you find in the dictionary of Socialism; it is a name at which a Socialist might laugh. But he finds his word in the history of Christianity. It is "paganism."

"We have paganism in our international affairs," he told me. "We find the world apparently topsy-turvy today, after almost twenty centuries of an attempt to follow Christ and His teachings. We have the greatest war in human history fought between nations that have followed Christianity. We have the outside world looking on the Christian nations in wonder and surprise. What is the matter with us? It is because we haven't been thoroughgoing Christian nations. The old paganism which ruled by force instead of by love and which ignored the Golden Rule for the rule of might hasn't been wiped out during these twenty centuries.

"We find paganism in our social and economic affairs. Whenever you find a social or an economic injustice being perpetuated you find not Christianity but paganism at work. Christ intended that His teachings should drive paganism out of the world and put great aims and spiritual hopes into the hearts and minds of men. And men, I find, want these aims and hopes. We are tired of paganism. It leads to nothing but the destruction of men and the destruction of nations.

"The Church, if it is to survive as an institution among men, must go out into the world and carry Christianity and its power everywhere that men are found.

"Whatever weakness you find in the Church today exists because of the failure of the Church to do this."

And what about the personal side of this famous man of the Church?

"I was a farmer boy," he told me. "My mother was a Methodist and I had my mind turned to religion when I was a child. I grew up, I think, with the idea in my mind that I was to become a clergyman. It seemed to me, from the very first, that it was the natural thing for me to be a Christian."

"Were you ever converted?" I asked.

"I can't remember ever having had any

mystical experience in my religious life," he said.

"But didn't you ever have any doubts as to religion?" I asked.

"Oh, many, many times," he answered, with a laugh.

"At the university?" I suggested. For every clergyman with whom I have talked has admitted to me that, in the university or college, he felt his religion slipping away from him.

"Yes! Yes!" answered the Bishop, laughing. "Intellectual measles is what I call such attacks of doubts. Almost every young man in school gets them."

"But why do they get intellectual measles in the universities?" I persisted.

"It is very simple," he answered, seriously. "Up to the time a young man goes to college, his religion has been a matter of the emotions. His faith has been founded on his emotion. But, in the higher schools, he discovers that his mind is seeking to justify the faith which his emotions have previously sustained. My mind achieved this and I discovered that it supported my faith in Christianity as well as my emotions had done. That transfer of faith from the emotions to the mind comes to the average young man in school and the best name I have

ever found for the experience is the 'intellectual measles.'"

Bishop Williams's career began in Ohio. He was born at Bellevue in 1860 and attended Kenyon College. He became a deacon at the age of twenty-three and, a year later, a minister in the Protestant Episcopal church. He served as rector in small charges in Ohio until, at the age of thirty-three, he became dean of Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland, Ohio. He served in the cathedral until he was elected and consecrated Bishop of Michigan, in 1906.

In Cleveland he was constantly engaged in activities outside the church, but always in his capacity as a representative of Christianity. He served as president of the library board of Cleveland for two terms and was chaplain of the Ohio National Guard for a time. Labour leaders knew him and came to him for advice; so did many of the great employers of Cleveland. His name was a household word in the city.

Just as Bishop Williams does not believe in a Christianity that is walled within a church, neither does he believe in a personal locked-up Christianity.

You know, well enough, after talking with him, what this short, gray-haired, smiling man would say to you if you went to him with a

personal spiritual problem. It is possible that, in print, the advice which he might give you will appear cold, but in your ears they would ring with life and hope.

"Quit worrying about your soul."

If there is anything that this rugged, square-shaped bishop believes and teaches with more earnestness than another it is the doctrine that if you try to save your life you shall lose it and if you are willing to lose it for Christ's sake, you shall save it.

"There is no other way by which a man can be saved," he told me. "Salvation comes by unselfishness. Selfishness, the direct effort to save your life, is paganism.

"Spend your life, your soul, your self —that is the very fundamental of Christian experience."

Yes, you know very well after uncovering this man, that, if you went to him with your own spiritual problem, he would, in every likelihood, tell you to stop worrying about it—and send you out to do something for somebody.

An artist could paint the position which Charles David Williams holds in the Protestantism of the United States far better than any writer can describe it.

The picture would show a great, massive church on a bleak, wintry night. The windows

would be bursting with light and through the open doors, into which crowds would be passing, you could catch glimpses of the brightness and warmth and comfort within.

But, moving away from the church, out into the darkness, with his back turned to all the comfort and spiritual assurance within the church walls, would be the figure of a man, holding a raised and gleaming cross.

That pictured man would be Bishop Williams. And he would be expecting you, as a Christian, to follow him.

V

JOHN ROACH STRATON

AN "OLD-TIME RELIGIONIST"

WHAT has the "old-time religion" to say for itself?

To tell the truth, it speaks strongly. The message it sends out to the world through such a virile and lively clergyman as John Roach Straton is convincing. Within the space of one month this writer held long interviews with Harry Emerson Fosdick, the great liberal leader, and with John Roach Straton, who is an able spokesman for the fundamentalist viewpoint. There is something convincing in what both men say. But I discover that these two men appeal to two different sides of my being. One speaks to my brain; the other to my heart. One appeals to my thoughts; the other to my emotions. "The old-time religion," as it is erroneously called—for it is being preached everywhere throughout the land—thrusts my thoughts aside and reaches me through my deepest emotions.

I have no intention, as an outsider, of taking sides in the issue between the fundamentalist and the liberal schools of religious thought, though, frankly, I must say that I believe that a religion that appeals to the emotions rather than to the intellect is likely to exert the more powerful influence on the life of the average person.

The fact remains, however, and as a reporter I am bound to record it, that both schools of religious thought, one with a brain-appeal and the other with a heart-appeal, seem to have a strong foothold in our churches in America.

V

JOHN ROACH STRATON

"And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story,
That I have loved so long."

EVERY word of this old song, forgotten for years, came back to me from my boyhood as I talked with John Roach Straton.

How astonishing it was that he, John Roach Straton, should send my mind back to so simple a thing as old-time religion! Frankly, I hadn't known what I would come away with from talking with this man. And I left him with this sweet old song ringing in my mind.

The New York daily papers, for over a year, had been telling of John Roach Straton and his work. He visited the dance halls of New York; criminals went to jail and police officers lost their jobs because of what Straton told in an Easter evening sermon. While all New York was joking uneasily about the fact that almost every play it went to see was rotten and

while New York was wondering why it couldn't see a good play now and then Straton arose and told New York that men who controlled the stage had decided that rottenness paid better than cleanliness and that rottenness, therefore, was what New York would get, if it went to the theatres. It had been burned into my mind, therefore, that Straton was a fighter of dance halls and lewd plays, a sensationalist.

When I talked with him I wanted to know *why* he was a fighter of these things; why these particularly sensational subjects had attracted his attention.

And all he talked to me about was the "old, old story, of Jesus and His love." After I had heard him through, I could see the *why* of all he says and does.

In the first place, I had expected, from all I had read and heard, to meet a hard-eyed, gray-haired, fun-hating, emotionless, bitter old Puritan, with a touch of side whiskers and never a smile. I didn't know whether I wanted to write about him or not. I found him young, good to look at, prematurely gray, with blue eyes, incredibly happy and kind and never a shadow of side-burns.

Two minutes—and I knew the world he lived in was not the world of white-lighted Broadway, or narrow-paved Wall Street, of

sensationalism and newspaper columns. His Master's work has taken him to those places.

I ask: "Wouldn't a churchful of old-time Christians be a sensation in your town?"

He got my mind off the theatres and the dance halls and off the newspaper-made Straton, who was in my thoughts, way back to Galilee, whence, I found, he himself takes his inspiration.

"The trouble with Christianity," he told me, "is that it has never been put over on the world. We must start way at the beginning, with the simple story of Christ, and begin all over again. We must get the world to take a new try at being Christian.

"The story of Christianity changed the world, once. And if Christianity had not been side-tracked, the world would have stayed changed and would never have reverted to the paganism in which we find ourselves today.

"The simple story of Christ can change the world again and we must forget everything else and tell only that story—Christ and Him crucified.

"We must prove to the world again, as Christ and His disciples proved to it, that there is nothing natural about Christianity, but that it is all supernatural; that it is a plan of God, not a scheme of men.

"We must show that Christ and His followers taught men to know God not with their minds but with their hearts, and that it is only through their hearts that they shall know Him.

"Today we are trying to reach Him through the scientists and the analysts, the historians and the anthropologists, and we are stretching our brains in our churches trying to apprehend Him.

"We must teach the world again how to seek Him with its whole heart. Christianity and the Church were thrown off the track about three centuries after Christ left the world; the devil crawled into the Church then and curled himself up there and he has been there ever since.

"Christianity is far simpler than the thing we call religion today. It was its very simplicity that rocked the world.

"Did you ever stop to think how simple it really was, as Christ preached it, and as His disciples taught it? There was no Darwinism in it and no problems of brain or science. It was all love and sacrifice.

"And did you ever stop to think what a mighty power it was? You know, all Christ told His disciples to do was to go out into the world and tell about Him and the story of His crucifixion and resurrection. That was all. It was a perfectly simple story; a beautiful story.

"After He had gone, the world was divided into two parts. On the one side was the great Roman empire, mistress of the earth, with its riches, unlimited power, and sin. On the other side was the tiny band of disciples. They were illiterate men, from the working classes. They were broke. Peter said to a beggar: 'Silver and gold have I none.' Christ had told them just to tell the story of what they knew. And as soon as they began to tell it the world began to rock. Everywhere men believed them. And men who believed worked miracles. Before long the simple story had found its way to Rome. And the story remained simple, without any frills. Persecuting the Christians and killing them did not weaken the power of the story. Men who heard that story could not help but believe.

"Christ knew what power that story would have over men. He said, 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all* men unto me.' Who could be surer of the power of God than He?

"The disciples died and disappeared from among men, but the story remained and men told it to each other everywhere. A hundred years after the crucifixion, it is estimated there were two hundred thousand Christians in the world. Three hundred years later there were about eight million Chris-

tians in the world, one-fifteenth of the Roman population.

"For three hundred years that simple story had compelled men to believe. And the lives of Christians made them envied of men. Let me show you what men thought of Christians in those days when the story of Christ was simple. Cyprian of Syracuse wrote a letter to a friend. I'll read it to you."

In a soft Southern accent, the preacher read these words, written when Christianity was three hundred years old:

"'This is a cheerful world as I see it from my garden, under the shadow of my vines. But if I could ascend some high mountain, and look out over the wide lands, you know very well what I should see; brigands on the highways, pirates on the seas, armies fighting, cities burning; in the amphitheaters, men murdered to please applauding crowds; selfishness and cruelty and misery and despair under all roofs. It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the

world. These people, Donatus, are the Christians—and I am one of them.'"

"That was a powerful story that worked, not intellectual changes in the minds of men, but miracle changes in their hearts and in the very seats of their lives," Dr. Straton went on. "It made men new men, different from other men in the world, interested in things of the spirit, not in the things of the world around them.

"It was a story that made men believe in eternity, and that taught them the value of sacrifice in exchange for life in that eternity. It taught them the futility of the things of this world and the importance of the things of eternity. It made theme serene and master of their souls.

"And then, suddenly, it was sidetracked. A Roman emperor took it into his head not only to stop persecuting the Christians but to recognise them and take them into the Roman fold. The leaders of Christianity were overwhelmed by the recognition. Pagan Rome took the Church into itself and the Church, in its turn, took in Rome. Two drops of quicksilver merged."

The preacher banged his desk. "And right then and there, the story ceased being simple. Paganism entered the Church and has been in the Church ever since. Its trappings are in our

churches yet." (I told you he was old-fashioned.) "They're on our altar rails, and on our preachers and on our choirs." (I have been told that Dr. Straton, in his pulpit in Calvary Baptist church, has refused to wear the black robe, which is customary in churches of all denominations in the East.)

"All I'm trying to do is to get way, way back to Jesus and the simple story He sent His apostles out to tell. You may call it old-fashioned, if you want to, because it's over nineteen hundred years old. But I want my religion nineteen hundred years old. That religion, nineteen hundred years ago, proved itself a religion of power. And it went on, proving that, for three centuries.

"After that it was muffled and distorted and twisted and buried in words and phrases and scholasticism, until, today, the wonder is that it has been powerful enough to endure so that we can even catch glimpses of its force and beauty.

"But, thank God, they've left the Bible alone. The simple story that Christ told His apostles to go out and preach is right here in this book, in beautiful and simple words," said the preacher, lifting a Bible from his desk. "It's all right there and if anyone asks me how we can get back to the story of Christ, as He

wanted it told to men, I only hold out this book and say, 'Forget everything else that man has achieved, with his hands or his brain, since this story was first told. Lay that all aside and go back to this old story and tell it to men. And soon, throughout the world, they will be whispering it, in wonder and in love, to each other as they did once before. They will understand it with their hearts. And the world will be filled with miracles.'"

You may be sure enough that Dr. Straton holds no beliefs in common with some of the famous clergymen of America who believe in intellectual comprehension of Christ's philosophy.

The brain and the mind are out of it, with Dr. Straton. "With your *hearts* ye shall know Him," he repeats over and over.

"Do you know what I tell these fellows who believe in intellectual comprehension of Christianity?" he said, earnestly. "Just put this down. It's the simplest thing in the world:

"Men don't go into sin with their brains. Any good set of brains will tell the owner to keep out of sin. Emotions and passions, not brains, lead men into sin, even while brains may be telling them to stay out.

"Men must leave sin by the same door

through which they entered it, through the door of the emotions. It is by the emotions that men grasp and comprehend that simple story of Christ."

Conspicuous and powerful as he is, Straton's whole thought and life is hinged on an experience which came to him when he was a wild youth of eighteen in Atlanta, Georgia. His father and mother were Christians but his studies and reading had unseated all his religious belief.

"I lost not only my faith but my morals as well," he told me. "I threw everything aside." One evening, with some young men, he went, in a light mood, to a revival meeting in the old First Baptist church, of Atlanta. He heard an old-fashioned sermon and that night he was converted.

"A miracle was worked in my life," he says. "And when we begin to tell only the old, old story from the pulpits of America, we can fill our land with miracles of that kind."

The eloquence of Dr. Straton is surpassingly beautiful in its simplicity; his church is filled to overflowing at every sermon and thousands of persons, in their homes, hear his sermons through the wireless broadcasting set that is fixed to the rim of his pulpit. It is possible for members of his old congregations in Norfolk

and Baltimore, and even, at times, in Chicago, to hear him preach. One Sunday recently, he sent out into the ether, in ringing tones, a story which electrified his own audience and which I give as a sample of the simplicity of his belief and the charm of his eloquence:

"Yonder, in the beautiful city of Baltimore, at the entrance of the great Johns Hopkins Hospital, there stands an exquisite, white, marble statue of Christ. It is in the great hall-way just inside the entrance door. It is a majestic and commanding and yet most compassionate figure. The arms are outstretched, the nail wounds are seen in the hands, the genius of the sculptor has put upon the face an expression of benignant longing, of yearning compassion. Inscribed upon the base of the statue are those words that fell from His own lips, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' It is an appropriate and beautiful monument for the entrance of a hospital, and many a troubled spirit and pain-racked body has been blessed in looking upon it.

"But it is said that once there came a cynic and a doubter, and he looked long and attentively upon that figure. He viewed it from the right and then he walked once more in front, but turned away at last with something like disappointment written upon his face. But there

was standing also near a little girl. With childish curiosity and eagerness she watched his face, and then when she saw him turn away without having read the deep message of that beautiful figure, she ran up to him and said, 'Oh, sir, you cannot see Him that way. You must get very close and fall upon your knees and look up!'"

As a man on the street, looking at the church from outside, and trying to size it up through its clergymen, I find a thrill in the religion of John Roach Straton. It is a religion for men and women in trouble, in a troubled world.

VI

S. PARKES CADMAN

THE PREACHER WHO "KNOWS"

THE man who *knows* is the man who catches the world's attention; he is the man who leads. The world asks him to do its great tasks. If this applies in the world of business or science or engineering or law or medicine why should it not also apply in the realm of religion?

The world yields authority to the man who *knows;* it will yield authority to the clergyman who *knows.* The man on the street, unchurched, or the woman in the home, unchurched, today do not often hear or appeal to clergymen who speak with uncertain authority of Divine affairs. In this book, elsewhere, the occasional mediocrity of the pulpit is mentioned.

Wishy-washy, half-baked and hesitating opinions on any subject do not get a hearing from the American public. We insist on experts, men who act on convictions and what they believe to be incontrovertible knowledge.

Dr. S. Parkes Cadman has, I believe, no hearers who do not swear by his beliefs and opinions. I have heard over the radio 3,000 men, Sunday after Sunday, cheer and shout and clap their hands in response to some opinion of Dr. Cadman on civic, political or economic questions. Dr. Cadman is so sure of his ground and so assertive that only those who accept his opinions find themselves comfortable in his audiences.

VI

S. PARKES CADMAN

YOU can't catch Samuel Parkes Cadman when he isn't busy at his job of being a minister of the Gospel.

In all my studies of the prominent clergymen of the United States I've often found myself wondering, "What is a parson's job, anyhow?" When I finally got hold of S. Parkes Cadman, I discovered that, if I had a talk with him, it would have to be while he was working at his job. And, as he worked, I saw something of the tasks that a busy clergyman makes a part of his profession.

Dr. Cadman reminded me of a certain famous French general I tried to interview during the war. I waited for several days until I got word that the general wasn't too busy to talk. When I entered his office I found a battery of six telephones lined up on his desk.

I had prepared a list of questions to fire at the great old warrior. A telephone bell rang as soon as I started on my first question. The general answered the 'phone, hung up the re-

ceiver and then turned to me again and said, "Now try again. What did you ask me?"

I repeated the question, but before I got an answer an orderly came into the room with a note. The general took a pen and paper and wrote a short reply, while the orderly waited.

"Now what did you say?" asked the general when the orderly had gone.

I tried the question again. Two telephones rang. The general answered one and his secretary stepped in from another room to answer the other.

"Please have patience," said the general, when the 'phones were silent again. He began to answer my question when his orderly interrupted with another message.

Half an hour had passed; I gave up and told the general I would come some other day. I never did have an interview with that man; but I had a story *about* him that told, more clearly than anything he could have said to me, what kind of a man he was.

That general believed in the war—and he didn't have to tell me so, in so many words.

Dr. Cadman reminded me, also, of a Wall Street oil magnate who once tried to tell me about his business and his career.

Secretaries kept running in and out, as we tried to talk; one brought him a telegram

showing that a new well in Mexico was throwing out hundreds of barrels of oil an hour; he gave orders over the telephone to half a dozen different branches of his great business; brokers called him on the telephone for information.

Finally he said to me, in apology, "I don't see how you can make head or tail out of what I'm telling you."

I had to explain that what he was *doing* was just as important and enlightening to me as what he was *saying*.

It was easy enough to see that he believed in the oil business. He didn't have to tell me that he did.

I caught that French general up to his neck in the business of fighting the war; caught that oil man up to his neck in the job of running his business. It was the only way I could have caught either of them because, for twenty-four hours a day, the general was a general, busy at war, and the oil man was an oil man, sunk in business.

So I caught Dr. Cadman—and it is the only way any one can catch him. He is busy all the time, with the astonishing busyness of a strong man who has good health and virility to throw away.

The first temptation is to analyse his busy-

ness; but I discovered that to do that would sidetrack me. It wasn't so much Cadman himself as the thing Cadman believed in that I was after. It was a beautiful spring morning in Brooklyn, with trees budding at the window, but we couldn't sit in his office and talk quietly. He had just come from the bedside of a dying man. There were three other homes to visit immediately. An automobile was waiting outside. It was the kind of an automobile the French general or the American oil man might have had. It wasn't a fancy automobile; it showed marks of service; a chauffeur sat at the wheel.

That entire afternoon was scheduled. I talked to the chauffeur almost as much as I did to Dr. Cadman during that interview.

"Every day's like this," said the colored chauffeur; "I have to take him to all these places this morning and then get him to the depot to catch the noon train. He's going somewhere to a funeral."

The driver had a list of addresses, prepared the day before by Dr. Cadman's secretary.

A physician drove up at high speed, and we stopped before a big stone house. An automobile truck drove away after having delivered half a dozen oxygen tanks. There was a fight for life going on in that mansion. Science was

trying to keep a man from slipping into eternity.

Dr. Cadman reached into his overcoat pocket and I saw his hand cover a little leather-bound Bible. A fine smile it was that I saw on his face as he stepped out of the car. There was confidence in that smile and assurance; there was *more* than belief in it; there was *knowledge*. That was the smile that he was carrying into the presence of death.

I saw the physician stop and look at the tanks of oxygen; I presume he had ordered them, as aids of science, for his patient. I saw him plunge up the steps, carrying his medicine case. And then I saw the short, square, strong figure of the clergyman, as he walked up the steps and disappeared through the doorway. I don't know what help the physician was taking into that house; I don't know how firmly he believed in the power of the science which he had called to his aid. But I do know the smiling light that was on the square and rugged face of that minister as he stepped beside that bedside; and I know that he *knew* the power of the religion he represented.

He came out soon. He climbed into the car and as we started off he took up his talk where we had left it.

"No theories! No theories!" he said. "I don't believe in theories. They're dangerous,

in everything—in business, in religion, in government. We must have things in this world that work. If things don't work, don't waste time on them. We must be practical. Time is too valuable to fool with theories."

I thought of how he had taken something that he *knew* would work into that sick-room. He hadn't carried any theory to that bedside. Until we came to another house of sickness he spent the time telling me about his conversion.

"You can't wear such a wonderful experience as that on your sleeve, for every one to see," he said. "It was an overwhelming experience. I was sixteen years old. My father was a Methodist preacher and I was raised in religious surroundings and I wanted to be converted; I had expected to be converted. When the experience came I found a new direction for my whole life. I have been headed in that direction ever since."

A policeman at a street crossing touched his cap and smiled at Dr. Cadman; the preacher touched his hat and smiled back. After we had received salutes from four policemen, I asked Dr. Cadman how long he had been in Brooklyn?

"Twenty-two years at the Central Congregational Church," he said. We were stopping before another house of sickness.

As he backed out of the automobile he said,

"I've taken four thousand members into that church in twenty-two years."

While he was in this house I figured out with pencil and paper that an average of four persons had joined Dr. Cadman's church every Sunday during almost a quarter of a century.

At this rate, I calculated, the churches in the United States would grow at the rate of over four million members a year, instead of considerably less than a million, as an average. I was just figuring how astonishingly Dr. Cadman was holding up his end of the church plank in America when he came into the car again.

"Four thousand new members in twenty-two years," he repeated, taking up his talk where he had left off.

"That's four a week," I suggested.

"Not any too good," he said. "Lots of lodges grow more quickly than that, don't they? But it's pretty good for a church in these days."

"How did you happen to go into the Congregational Church from the Methodist Church?" I asked.

Right there I uncovered what one preacher, at least, thinks of the divisions of Protestantism in the United States.

"Because I was called there," he answered crisply. Before we reached the next house

which death was menacing Dr. Cadman told me about how the divisions in Protestantism were holding up the teaching of religion in the public schools of America.

"We ought to be teaching the children about God in the public schools of the country," he told me. "But only too often the Protestants stand in the way while the Jews and Catholics often seem willing to have such a system instituted. We had a preacher come over to Brooklyn once to tell the ministers' association about the benefits of teaching religion in the public schools. He talked splendidly. We were all enthusiastic. But he wound up his talk by telling us that he wanted his own particular creed taught in the schools; he wouldn't countenance anything else."

"How many different churches are there in Brooklyn?" I asked, remembering that Brooklyn is called the "City of Churches."

"I don't know, but I *do* know that there are altogether too many," he answered. "There are eighty-three divisions of Protestants," he added.

He went into another house while I waited.

When he came out he plunged into conversation again; perhaps something that had happened at the bedside gave him his theme.

"People in this world need religion," he said.

"They need it like they need sleep, or food, or water. Religion is a necessity of life. You can't live life rightly without it. I don't worry about religion dying out in this generation or in any generation. Wipe religion right out of our civilisation today and you'll have it with you again tomorrow. And by religion I don't mean religious theories. I mean a belief in a supernatural God; a belief in immortality; a belief that helps people to build their lives. People will have religion, because they must have it. The demand for it is born in them."

We were at the railroad station at last; the chauffeur called our attention to the fact. The train left in five minutes.

Dr. Cadman stood on the curb and talked four minutes more.

I tried to get him to talk about the Church; about the Bible. I hope my readers will understand me when I say that I might as well have tried to get that French general to talk about one certain gun or the oil man to talk about one certain oil derrick, forgetting the great things that the gun or the derrick might be doing. It is the things that are being done and that ought to be done—not the tools for doing them—that interest your great man. Give him the tools and he forgets them; his mind dwells on the things that his tools accomplish.

One of the last things he said to me in that firing-line talk that morning was this (and I hope my readers will find in his words the meaning that I got out of them):

"People too often forget that the Bible is only a prescription. Only too often, instead of *following* the prescription, they try to *swallow* it, mistaking it for the medicine it specifies."

That was a simple picture, true to the occasion, after that morning of death-beds. I could see in it all the causes for the divisions in the Protestant Church against which Dr. Cadman fights.

There was the great Doctor of Nazareth giving the prescription to men; and here were men in the pulpits of America, devouring the words of the prescription itself and ignoring the Restorative.

As the rugged face turned away from me, with a smile—yes, and a hearty wink—and the sturdy, square back disappeared in the crowd, I was left with that picture in my mind, of the strange and inexplicable quarrel among men over the Prescription.

When a man works as hard as Dr. Cadman works, he must not only believe in the thing he works for, but he must *know* that it is worth his while. Dr. Cadman is, I understand, one of the

best known pulpit orators and lecturers in the United States. He rarely misses a Sunday in his own pulpit, but he travels extensively to keep important lecture engagements. He has been known to travel half way across the continent to deliver a single lecture.

He is a strong man, and the world call on strong men, to give it what it needs. It wasn't hard for me, as a man on the street, to see Samuel Parkes Cadman behind the desk of that able old French general or in the chair of that successful oil man. You do not need to know of the books he has written or of the prominent positions he holds on various boards and directorates to realise the high ability of the man.

He knows what he knows, as strong men do. And he speaks with the authority of that knowledge. You can't talk with him very long, or hear him preach or lecture—or see him at his work—without realising that there is such a thing in this world as religion; that this strong man knows that religion is a need of humanity; that he has decided for himself that it is worth a lifetime of effort to bring religion to man.

You can leave to weak men the simple and futile task of taking religion at its face value, without test or without personal experience or knowledge of it. It was this writer's growing

conviction, as he progressed with his studies of various men who hold places of importance in American pulpits, that one trouble with the Church is that it is too greatly manned by men who lack personal and mystic experience of religion and its power.

The weak men of the Church are the mere prescription-readers; they are safe, it seems, in passing on divine advice.

The strong men of the Church whom I have met, like Dr. Cadman, are the pharmacists who try to fill the Prescription. They are full of assurance and positive personal knowledge; brave enough to speak with authority. That's the only kind of a preacher that I, as a man on the street, find it worth while listening to; the only kind that proves the power of religion to me.

It wasn't the mere Prescription that that sturdy, square-shouldered man carried to those sick-beds, as he entered those homes, with his hand on his pocket Bible, that spring morning. With all reverence I say it was the Medicine prepared with faith and knowledge, by a strong man, with no theories, who knew it would work.

I have found several clergymen, in my search, who are making the kind of Church the world needs; Dr. Cadman is one of them. Find in America a hundred of him, and put them to

work, and it won't take many years to prove to us all that there is a way by which the Church and religion can make our bewildered lives, with all the distractions of our civilisation, purposeful and aimed; fully worth while.

The Church and religion will not pass out of American life while you have Cadmans.

VII

CHRISTIAN F. REISNER

AN EXPONENT OF RELIGIOUS ADVERTISING

SENSATIONALISM in the pulpit—if there's one thing more than another that injures the Church, today, in the minds of outside people, it's that.

When Christian F. Reisner made an engagement to meet me he said, "Drop in at the advertising club this afternoon. I have a committee meeting there today." And it was there I first met him and talked with him. He is president of the Church Advertising Department of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World. He makes no secret of the fact that he believes in church advertising.

There is a form of pulpit sensationalism that is disgusting to the unchurched public. I have in mind a Bible verse which I remember from boyhood, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It always seemed to me that, if this verse meant anything, pulpit sensationalism was useless nonsense. Whatever sensational preachers may think, people go to church to hear about religion, and not to be amused. Dr. Reisner's so-called sensationalism ends when he steps into the pulpit. It is a sacred rule with him to preach, or talk nothing else in his pulpit but religion. There is a great difference between his method and that of many preacher-sensationalists.

VII

CHRISTIAN F. REISNER

HERE'S a man who stirs up things wherever he goes. In order to tell the amazing truth about him and his work in this chapter, I must tell the whole truth. It is this: The stir he has made had confused me about him. As a man on the street I was constantly seeing in the newspapers that Dr. Reisner was doing this or doing that, saying this or saying that, fighting this cause or opposing that. My ideas about the famous clergyman were not very definite; they came to me through newspaper columns. But my impression of him was that he was a preacher who paid much attention to worldly things and did not emphasise the things that we folks from the worried paths of daily life go to church to hear.

I must frankly admit that I have discovered my newspaper impressions of every great clergyman I have met in preparing this book to be utterly wrong. Meeting the men face to face, hearing them talk and finding out what they stood for and what they aimed at, changed

my early opinions in every case. These really great leaders have exactly that effect on men. When they come face to face with you you may then measure their greatness, their sincerity and their sympathy. All of your preconceived ideas fade away; the impressions you have received of them through hearsay and through reading are usually quickly altered.

And so my views of Dr. Reisner, the man who always makes a stir, went glimmering, after I had got down to the hard pan of the man's personality.

His stir has a purpose behind it. I had been wrong in emphasising his stir. The thing that I got at was why he made the stir.

I never saw less "religion" in a parson, among all those I have interviewed, than I found in Christian F. Reisner. Also, I never heard a parson use fewer "you oughts," or "you ought nots." He doesn't fool with that weak word "ought." He uses "must."

Here is a great preacher who says to thousands of persons weekly, "You must be a servant of God." And he says this convincingly. Easy enough it might be for a man of lesser power to repeat these words in parrot-fashion and to find them meet with no response.

But during twenty years of his life, in four different churches, not a Sunday has passed that

Dr. Reisner has not taken new members into his church. Over seven thousand of his fellow citizens in such widely separated places as Kansas, Colorado and New York City he has let into probation or into membership in the Methodist Church. The stir he makes is to attract men and women into the range of his persuasive "must."

"Where did you find so many good people?" I suggested to him. "How do you pick them out?" I had in mind his thousands of church members.

"Why, I wasn't looking for good people," he replied, with a great hearty laugh. "I hunt around only for people who want to be good."

And then he gave me the key to all his astonishingly successful work in church building.

"What are good people, anyway?" he asked me. "The Church doesn't need good people. And I presume that good people don't need the Church. I've never been able to find any room in my work or my plans for people who were merely good.

"Good people!" he exclaimed. "When I meet folks who think they're good, I can't fit in with them. Folks who are just good are usually good for nothing. I'm looking for folks who are good for something."

Please, my readers, do not believe that I,

as a man on the street, in interviewing some of the greatest clergymen in the United States, have escaped personal sermons, directed solely at myself. I have not told, in the various chapters I have written, all that some of these men have said; especially what they have said about my own personal responsibility in the matter of religion.

But Dr. Reisner hit the closest home of all of them, for me, personally, as he continued his talk about "good people."

"No man who's in his good senses," he went on, snapping out his words, "ever says 'I can be as good out of the Church as I can in it.' What does he mean by being 'good'? That kind of goodness makes me sick. Make him change his sentence. Make him put it this way: 'I can be as good for something outside of the Church as I can in it,' and then ask him if that doesn't sound silly?

"You can't be good for something outside of religion and the Church. The men who do things in this world are men who believe in God and who have His teachings as their background and their faith in Him as their guide.

"I put it coldly. A man cannot be a great man and not have a belief in God. To do great things in this world a man must be trying to serve God and his fellow men. If that isn't his

first and primary purpose then, no matter how high he seems to rise for a time, he's bound to go down in wreckage.

"Men must believe in God in order to achieve anything in this world. You can call that 'religion' if you want to. I call it necessity. It's that portion of mankind that believes in God and tries to serve Him and fulfil His wishes that controls the destiny of nations. Men who do not believe in God and who do not try to work with Him can not be leaders of men. All history shows this. And a study of all the leaders of our present day proves it.

"Belief in God is the vital part of human greatness and all permanent human accomplishment. You can't build anything in this world that will endure or that will sway men unless you build according to God's plan and His guidance."

I'm giving his machine-gun talk straight out, as he gave it to me, but I cannot put into printed words the commanding assurance and authority with which he spoke.

"My sole object, in all my life, has been to tell as many men and women as I can reach that they must serve God if they want their lives to be worth while, to be even worth living."

"And by 'believing in God,' what do you mean?" I asked.

He smiled.

"Yes, I know what you're driving at," he said. "I'll put it straight for you. I tell my people that they must believe in a personal God and must be personally accountable to Him. I tell them that He lives and is their Father; that He loves them, every single one of them and that He will care for them, individually, each man and woman in the world who asks for His care and tries to serve Him. No, sir!" he emphasised, "I don't believe in any vague thing of goodness called God. I take the whole old-fashioned Methodist doctrine. I don't ask people to serve a hazy thing called goodness. I don't even ask them to be good. I tell them that the only way to live is to believe in a personal God and to love Him and let Him guide their lives. Goodness follows; not wishy-washy goodness, but goodness for something."

"You're good for something in this world—for service of some kind to your fellow men—or you're good for nothing." Dr. Reisner says this over and over again. It's what he tells his great crowds, after he has gathered them by the stir he makes.

"You're a useless zero, without a belief in God." That's his message to the men and women who come within his range.

It's the kind of talk that comes very close home to the man on the street. Listen to it, as so many hundreds of thousands have done, and then go home and try to put into your own words the idea Dr. Reisner has got into your mind. It will seem to you as if he has talked right straight at you alone, perhaps. What did he say? You may not remember his exact words, but your impression will be something like this:

"He looked right down at me, straight into my face, and he said, 'You poor, helpless blank! You poor zero! Here you are, trying to play your part in the world, in your little way. Here you are trying to keep your home clean and fine. Here you are trying to raise your children, your boys and girls, to be good and useful citizens. Here you are trying to be a useful citizen yourself, and you aren't even started right. You never can succeed, the way you're going. If you want to do any of these things, if you want to carry out the simplest duties of parenthood or of good citizenship you must believe in God and in your accountability to Him. You must take Him as a personal God and ask Him to keep His eye on you and tell you what to do and how to go."

And then it may seem to you as if he had said:

"Of course, if you think you haven't any duties of any sort in this world; if you're not going to try to carry your end of the load and be a real man; if you're going to dodge all responsibilities and try to sneak through, living the life of a mere animal, without an effort to make either yourself or those around you any better, then, perhaps you can get along without God's help. But, oh! what a despicable, useless thing you will be!"

That's what Dr. Reisner gives to you, in a talk, or in a sermon; that's what he has given to the throngs that have heard him in various parts of the country for the past fifth of a century.

The Christianity he preaches doesn't have any easy way in it. It isn't any shelter from a storm; indeed, it may take you out into the storm. It isn't any short-cut through life; it's a path for sturdy feet. It isn't a garden of rest; it's a field of service where your spiritual muscles are always in use. It isn't a place of sighing sacrifice; it's a place where you must do things for men, at great cost to yourself, taking your pay in the good coin of your God's quiet "Well done."

No, there's nothing vague or wishy-washy in the Christianity that Dr. Reisner preaches. It's a religion for you, for today, to help you in

helping the world and thus escape having your own life useless. Heaven comes afterwards, but that takes care of itself, if you take care, as best you can, of God's today.

There's no secret about Dr. Reisner's success in bringing members into his church every Sunday and in helping to sway and direct the lives of thousands of men and women in these United States.

The secret of his success is his "You must serve God," with his persuasive warning against living a zero life. He takes people into his church to serve; he demands that they do something; he finds work and service for them, when they cannot find it for themselves.

He has come across an old secret of man's contact with God and all the success he has had arises from the fact that he speaks with authority and that he points the way to service.

His orthodox Methodism that makes a man's contact with God intimate and personal, with no human intermediary, only adds to the strength of his methods.

Frankly, I believe that the man on the street today, in America, is waiting for a religion that possesses authority. A religion that commands him, rather than one that gently and vaguely advises, is something that he can hang on to.

I wonder if the preachers that are not afraid to show him the spiritual musts of life, rather than the vague oughts, are not the men that he is willing to listen to and to follow? The "ought" is mushy; the "must" is concrete.

I have shown you what Dr. Reisner believes and what he preaches. Now to get back to the somewhat disconcerting stir which he is constantly making.

"If you've got a message you've got to get people together to listen to it," he explained to me. "It would be a crime for me to gather a great audience by giving away roses or by having a noted secular speaker in my pulpit, if I preached anything but Christ and Him crucified. I must get people into my church. I believe in advertising to attract them. God helps me to do the rest. After I've got them into my church, I give them nothing but the baldest truths about religion. They may come into my church thinking about some trivial thing. They go out, if I am successful, thinking about the deepest things of life; thinking new things they'll never forget."

Dr. Reisner was born and raised in a little town in Kansas. His father, John, borrowed money to send him to Midland College, at Atchison. The boy helped by working on a newspaper. When it came time to choose his

life-calling, young Christian wanted to be a clergyman.

"I don't know why," he told me. "I never did know. It just seemed to me to be the only thing I wanted to do."

There were hard times in the country then.

The rugged old Kansas father borrowed money, at fifteen per cent. interest, to get his son started in the Boston University School of Theology. At twenty-four the fight for an education was over; the boy was ordained in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

He took a little church in the packing-house district at Kansas City, Kansas. The membership was made up of a very small group of packing-house employees, with their families. He stayed there six years. Today a one hundred thousand dollar church is being built by that congregation, after a recent fire. That packing-house church has given three professors to American colleges.

In Denver Dr. Reisner built up a great congregation by his methods of attracting audiences and enlisting members.

When he was called to Grace Church, in New York City, that famous old institution had been labouring under a twenty thousand dollar debt for over twenty years. It was part of the original building debt! Dr. Reisner, within a

short time, raised seventy thousand dollars, paid off the debt, spent twenty thousand dollars in refurnishing the church and established the nucleus of a fund for meeting overhead expenses of the church.

Now, with Grace Church well on its feet, he's starting off again.

There's a church on the upper end of Manhattan Island, known as Chelsea Church. It's in a district that has grown so rapidly with the development of high-class apartment houses that no one has even had time to establish a large church there.

Dr. Reisner is there now. Crowds are hearing him. Poor, crowded New Yorkers—business men and high-salaried folks—dwellers in the thousands of marble-halled, elevator-equipped apartments in that district, crowd into the church to listen to Dr. Reisner's formula for making life worth while.

They come from all over the country, these New Yorkers.

"Some of them haven't heard old-fashioned sermons for years," explains Dr. Reisner. "Sometimes I feel more like a missionary to them than a clergyman with a charge."

"I want to build up at least one more great church," this amazing clergyman told me. "I want to turn this hole-in-the-ground church into

a mighty institution, where thousands can serve God."

Within a few months after Dr. Reisner first conceived his idea of a great towering church building in New York he had collected over one million dollars toward the project. At this writing his amazing dream of a Twentieth Century church building, to cost $4,000,000 and to house, under its sky-scraping roof and its thirty-foot lighted cross, hundreds of apartment dwellers, many of whom will attend and help to support the great church within the great structure seems well on the way toward realisation. It is his dream to have the bells and the steeples of at least one church stand out with the tips of the greatest business structures on the sky-line of an American city. That's advertising with him; keeping people from forgetting.

And that's Reisner. You can forgive the stir he makes, after you understand it—and see results. He's not trying to make good people; he's trying to make people good for something. And he shows them the way.

VIII

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON

AN ORATOR WHO PREACHES TO THE HEART

"MENTAL laziness in the pulpit" and "laxness in the preparation of sermons" have been mentioned in another note in this book. No one could have come in contact with eleven famous clergymen, as I did, and have asked them such direct questions as I asked, without discovering that these things exist in the American pulpit, and that they are *known* to exist.

Dr. Jefferson's feelings about weak and mediocre preaching are made very evident in this chapter that deals with him and his work. But a pleasant discovery is hidden away in what Dr. Jefferson told me of his life. The so-called little preacher, the obscure preacher, need not be a mediocre preacher; he may be a man of great power and hidden influence.

Buried deep in Dr. Jefferson's story is a little-known preacher whose name, to Dr. Jefferson, is Tom Johnson. He speaks it endearingly. Of the three charges which this great clergyman, Jefferson, has held during his career, he was directed to two by Thomas Johnson, a Methodist minister. To Thomas Johnson, wherever he is today, America probably owes the great Broadway Tabernacle; it was being built by Dr. Jefferson while Thomas Johnson was quietly serving in out-of-the-way Methodist churches of New England. I take this to mean that not all of a clergyman's work consists of preaching.

VIII

CHARLES E. JEFFERSON

NOT many years ago I was a young fellow who had just come to New York. It isn't so long ago that I have forgotten the thrill of it. A room in a little hotel; theatres now and then; the work at the office; an evening walk through bright Broadway; no one to tell you when to eat or what to eat—or when to go to bed—that was a fine life, for a little while. I was trying my shingle, to see whether it would float me.

Of course a young fellow gets homesick, now and then, in New York. And of all the cures for homesickness, Broadway is the worst. Broadway doesn't cure homesickness any more than cold draughts cure a cold or goldenrod cures hay fever.

And yet, on Broadway, one evening I found a cure for a boy's homesickness that I used to take every now and then when the sickness was too heavy. It was a church—on Broadway! It was not far from the brightest lights. I remember one bright sign near by used to flash

out the time, once a minute. "8:53. Time for a Wilson's Highball. That's all." There was the old electric advertising sign of the Ben Hur chariot race; very remotely that used to remind me of the gentler things of life—and home.

But there on Broadway, I found a church. It had no steeple like a church. I don't know to this day where its bells are. I suppose it *does* have bells, but I have never heard them ring, because I'm never on Broadway—and very few other people are—on a Sunday. It was a great, beautiful, massive structure of brick, with a huge tower, surmounted by a pyramid that might almost be a brother to the pyramids of Egypt.

I noticed the building because on its front, up against the walls, flashing out with the whiskey signs and the theatre advertisements, was a Cross. I went into that church on Broadway that night, I think, to see what a church that didn't look like a church would be like.

But as soon as I entered I found it was just like church at home. The sermon was very simple; it had the sort of thing in it that told a young fellow that life couldn't be all theatres and whiskey and flashing lights. The words the man in the pulpit used were very short words; but powerful; they were wonderfully arranged. And the strong voice was more

resonant and pleasing than the voices of some of the greatest actors along that famous street of elocution.

I went more than once to hear this square-faced, sturdy man, in his simple but thrilling oratory, tell people how to live. He was as great an orator as I had ever heard. That was a dozen years ago. I have since then heard some famous statesmen deliver orations on some mighty themes—Lord Kitchener, in the British Parliament; Lloyd George, at the Paris Peace Conference; Clemenceau, the hurler of polished steel words; Woodrow Wilson, in the Clock Room at the Quai D'Orsay, in Paris, at the highest moment, perhaps, of his life, when he delivered to the world the covenant of the League of Nations in an oration never to be forgotten. And yet of all the orators I have ever heard, expounding the vastest themes, I can not remember one who has thrilled me more than this sturdy man who used to speak on the theme of how to live rightly, in the Broadway Tabernacle in my early days, who speaks there now, and who, after twenty-five years of speaking there, promises to fill that famous pulpit for many years more.

I hasten to agree with my readers that mere oratory in the pulpit is worse than silence. A preacher who has no more to offer to a soul-

sick world than pretty words, charmingly accented, in a pleasant voice, is worse than no preacher at all; he's no medicine for soul-worry; he's only a picture of a medicine bottle.

But the oratory of Charles Edward Jefferson was not the main thing in his preaching; it was an added thing; added to a religion that reached the heart.

When I went to talk to him, not long ago, in that same great pile of a building in Broadway at Fifty-sixth Street, I had not heard him for over a dozen years; and never before had I met him at close range. I wanted to know about him; what kind of a man he was, and how he became that kind of a man.

I realized, before I got to his study in the church, that he was a big man, with big ideas. Perhaps you picture his study, as I had—a quiet group of rooms, off from the dimly lighted empty church. But it was not like that. When I went through the doorway, off of Broadway, that opens into the famous pyramid-topped tower, which is one of the foothills of the mountainous sky-line of the city, I found an elevator.

I couldn't be sure I was in a church building; this might have been the entrance to any of the buildings along New York's automobile row, in which the famous old tabernacle now stands.

"Is this the Broadway Tabernacle?" I asked the coloured elevator man.

"Yes, sir. Yes, sir," he answered.

When I told him I wanted to see Dr. Jefferson, he shot the elevator up to the sixth floor. On the way up, I asked questions.

"Is this all church?" I asked him.

"Yes, indeed," he said proudly. "This is all the Broadway Tabernacle."

"Does the church rent out offices?" I asked. It was hard to imagine a church filling a great Broadway building like this.

"No, sir," he said, emphatically. "The church folks keep this building busy enough."

We stopped at the sixth floor.

"How many more floors are there?" I asked.

"Two more," he said. "It's a mighty big church."

He was right. All of the thousands of visitors, from all over the United States, who have ever come to visit the famous Tabernacle in Broadway will agree with him.

I was on my way to meet the man who had dreamed and planned and built this church. He surely had built largely.

When I found his study, I discovered it was really a study—big chairs, a fireplace, hundreds of books, and a big roll-top desk.

And there sat the square little man, looking out through the window, over the roof of the church auditorium, toward where the evening lights of Broadway were already beginning to glow.

Within a few minutes we were deep in talk. I was after the "why" of his life. How do great business men, who build mighty things, happen? How do they come out of obscurity of life, among the rest of us humdrum folks, and erect their monuments? How did it happen that this man-builder of this great church, teacher of hundreds of thousands of Americans, through his lectures and books as well as his sermons, came up out of the general average to be what he is today?

It was as simple and plain a story he told me as I have ever heard in my life; that is, simple, as he told it, in his one-syllable words, with his pleasant smile.

He was a schoolboy who went off to the University from his little home town—and never got back home again. He never had the discouraging experience of the college boy, who, after he is graduated, goes back home to the folks, sticks away his diploma, and then worries about what he is going to do in the world.

Charles Edward Jefferson was knee-deep in

affairs of the world before he had finished his university course; the world never did let him get back home, except for short visits to the little town of Cambridge, Ohio.

Here's how it was, as he told it to me, in his study overtopping Broadway.

"My parents wanted me to study law," he said. "I suppose that was because I was an orator. When I graduated from the high school, I was the class valedictorian. I went to Ohio Wesleyan University, and there are folks there yet, perhaps, who will remember some of my speeches and orations—though they may not remember what I spoke about, or what I had to say.

"The year I was graduated from Wesleyan, I went to Worthington, Ohio, a little town then, to teach school. For two years I had the title of superintendent of public schools.

"While I was in Worthington I had classes in elocution in the Ohio Wesleyan University and in the Ohio State University, at Columbus.

"I suppose I was a pretty good orator," he said, laughing.

"In 1884 I went off to Boston to attend the law school of Boston University.

"I was unspeakably unhappy in Boston. Here I was on the verge of life, but I could not seem to get into touch with the real

things of life. I may have been an orator, but I couldn't find anything in the law to orate about. It seemed unreal. And I wanted real things.

"I had been raised in a Christian home, but I had forgotten much of my religion in school. I suppose my gift of oratory had made me especially critical of preaching. I had lost interest in the Church, because I could see how carelessly many clergymen preached. I could see that they had been lax in preparing their sermons. I could trace mental laziness in their preaching, and I had lost patience with the pulpit. I was getting oratory and preaching confused.

"One Sunday evening I went to Old Trinity Church, in Boston, to hear Phillips Brooks. He was one of the greatest orators of his day, among all those great clergymen of the Boston of that day. And behind his oratory was a fire of belief in Christ. Oratory came second with him; his great conviction came first. He was a man who had something to talk about.

"All my prejudices against the pulpit went from me, as I heard Phillips Brooks. He was proof that the religion of Jesus Christ is worthy of the humble services of the greatest talents that a man may possess.

"In those days in Boston, sick of the law, I

35 times

could hardly wait for Sunday to come around so that I might hear Brooks. He made my spirit hungry. I went to hear other great preachers in that city, and I decided that there could be nothing more important in life for me to do than to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I took as the motto of my life—'For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.' And all my life since then I have lived by that motto."

He stopped a minute, and smiled to himself.

"Do you know," he said, after the pause, "that I believe I have done a thing that no preacher before me has ever done? I have preached thirty-five different sermons on that one verse. Once every year I take that verse as a text. I have never missed a year. That was the text of the first sermon I ever preached. It would be the text of my final sermon, if I could have my way.

"In that verse is the fundamental bed-rock truth of the entire Bible and of the religion of all Christendom."

And so, in mid-stream of his university life, the young man shifted from the law school to the school of theology in the Boston University. He didn't ask the advice of the folks back home —his father and mother.

"I think they would have been greatly

surprised and perhaps disappointed if they had known what I was planning to do," Dr. Jefferson told me, smilingly. While he was studying theology and planning his life on his new motto, he studied elocution under three masters.

Is it any wonder that this writer, with thousands of other young men, who, during the past quarter of a century have found their way to the Broadway Tabernacle, have been thrilled by the eloquence of that preacher?

"Do you know Tom Johnson?" Dr. Jefferson suddenly asked me.

"The man who was Mayor of Cleveland?" I asked.

"Oh, no," he said. "He's a Methodist preacher. He used to be in Ohio. I think he's preaching somewhere in New England now. He never tried to take any big charges. He always seemed content to preach to folks in out-of-the-way places.

"That Methodist minister has had a tremendous influence over my life. In some way, while I was in Boston, he heard that a church in FitzWilliam, New Hampshire, needed a pastor. I don't believe I ever did hear how he made that discovery. But he wrote a letter to the officials of that church telling them that there was a young man in Boston who ought to

be their pastor. I was given the position; it was a little church in the summer resort district.

"Some time later he heard that the Congregational Church at Chelsea, Massachusetts, needed a pastor. He wrote a letter to the officials of that church also.

"It was an interesting letter. He said in it that I was one of the greatest young orators in the country—silver-tongued. The officials of the church went over the list of applicants for the place, and one of them, picking up Tom Johnson's letter, said laughingly: 'Let's investigate this silver-tongued wonder that this man writes about.' And so they investigated me and called me to the pulpit of that great Congregational church.

"I went back to Cambridge, Ohio, to marry the girl of my home days, and we settled down in the Chelsea district. For ten years and a half I was the pastor in the Chelsea church.

"And then, in 1898, I was called to the Broadway Tabernacle.

"And I have been here, ever since," he added. "Only three churches—and Thomas Johnson found me two of them."

There are a few churches in the United States that are national institutions. Boston has several; Washington, the capital, has two or three, and so have New York and Brooklyn.

Broadway Tabernacle is one of the most famous of our national churches, and it was with this big viewpoint that Dr. Jefferson built it, and has kept it going at full and mighty blast. When a Congregationalist finds himself in New York on a Sunday he turns to this famous old church, thrilled at the sight of the blazing cross and thrilled by the eloquence of the great preacher.

But it has cost a mighty effort to keep Broadway Tabernacle going at full blast. It isn't an easy thing to keep a church running on Broadway.

It was a long-lighted torch that was handed to Charles Jefferson when he was called to the pulpit of the Tabernacle. He was only thirty-seven years old. Before him, in the history of the congregation, had come four preachers. One of these, Dr. Joseph P. Thompson, had served for twenty-six years. Another, Dr. William A. Taylor, had served twenty-one years. These were names that were almost sacred to the young preacher. Into his hands had been put the results of the life-work of these two famous clergymen.

"Here's a torch that must be kept alight," said the young clergyman.

But the light was flickering. The church was known, at that time, as the Thirty-fourth

Street Tabernacle. It was situated in the business district, because, in the sweep of change in New York City, the business district had grown around it. People who went to church there were forced to take the same long trip on a Sunday morning or evening that they took on week-days to go to their business.

Once, before, in the history of the church, it had been moved. In its early days—in the forties—the church had stood in Worth Street; business buildings had surrounded it and driven out the residents, and Dr. Joseph T. Thompson had moved the church to Thirty-fourth Street.

It had stood there for almost half-a-century when young Jefferson took charge of it. But he folded the tent and moved.

"He told us what kind of a church he wanted," Dr. Lucien Warner, an old-time member of the Tabernacle, told me, "and we felt we had to get it for him. He told us what rooms he wanted—classrooms for the young folks and for men and women; offices for different purposes.

"We looked over the ground and over his plans and we saw that the only way we could get what he wanted was to build into the air. Before we got through we had an eight-story building at the corner of Fifty-sixth Street and Broadway."

That was in 1905. The Tabernacle has the largest membership today that it has ever had. In one respect it is like a country church, because its members must come such vast distances. At every service, of course, there are visitors from every corner of the United States. But it might interest these visitors to know that the members of this church, sitting in the audience with them, have come, some of them, from homes twenty or thirty miles away. Persons who live fully one hundred miles apart, meet regularly at the services.

Like the old country parson who, on his horse, made a day's journey for a visit to a death-bed, so this parson of the great church on Broadway, finds his parishioners so far apart that it is sometimes a day's trip, in the fastest suburban trains, to reach one end of his parish and to return.

It's hard to keep any Protestant church going on Manhattan Island. Two and a quarter million people live on the island, but only 177,500 are Protestant church members.

On Manhattan Island—Dr. Jefferson, himself, has compiled these figures, with the aid of his assistants, who are constantly studying the New York church problem—on Manhattan Island, English is the mother tongue of only one hundred and ten thousand people! Less

than one person in every fifteen on Manhattan speaks English by birthright. German is the mother-tongue of two hundred thousand; Italian or Greek of four hundred and thirty thousand, while Hebrew is the mother-tongue of five hundred and thirty-nine thousand. Manhattan is the largest Jewish city which has ever existed on this planet. Over one million Jews have come to New York since Dr. Jefferson took charge of the Broadway Tabernacle; and there are thirty-six fewer Protestant churches now than then. Ninety-three Protestant churches have literally died in Manhattan since the opening of this century.

A strange parish, this. Time and again Dr. Jefferson's aids have scoured the neighbourhood of the church, looking for Protestant young people.

"It is amazing," he says, "how few Protestant boys and girls there are within a mile of this church."

These are facts about this great task that Jefferson realises, as he stands in his pulpit in Broadway and throws all the power of his oratory into a summons to Christianity.

"I often think of my early dreams," he says. "I dreamed of being the pastor of a village church, somewhere among the hills of New England. I pictured myself in an earthly para-

dise in which I should have a group of earnest people gathered round me week after week, whose religious education I could superintend through the years, and whose lives I could by faith and prayer and patient labour intertwine into a bundle of life through which the Spirit of the Eternal might work on the temper and conduct of the community. I was to study in the quiet of the fields and to write my sermons in the silence of undisturbed mornings, and deliver my messages unmolested by the noises of the world, and do all my work in blessed tranquillity. And, after all this air-castle building, think of my settling down for twenty-five years of my life on Broadway, 'the most discouraging and hopeless situation in the whole world to induce men to think of God and the soul.'"

In his sermon celebrating his twenty-fifth anniversary, Dr. Jefferson told his audience these things, and then he said: "But I have had the wind in my face so long that I do not mind it. I have rowed against the stream so many years that I find it quite exhilarating.

But while he rows, and while the winds blow, he still finds energy remaining with which to help thousands of folks—young folks, for instance, away from home, on that weird, strange, magnetic island of Manhattan.

IX

BISHOP FRANCIS J. McCONNELL

A BISHOP WHO AIMS TO CHRISTIANISE INSTITUTIONS

IN American pulpits there are some great clergymen who preach personal religion. I find there are others who do *not* emphasise personal religion, but strive to make Christianity a great, compelling force in American institutions. They would Christianise not only individuals, but civilisation itself.

It happened that the only two bishops with whom I talked—Bishop Francis J. McConnell, of the Methodist Episcopal church, and Bishop Charles David Williams, of the Protestant Episcopal church—both had this viewpoint.

"Accept Christianity for yourselves, and then introduce it into your labour unions, so that they will be inspired by Christian motives"—this, in substance, was Bishop McConnell's advice to labour. "Christianise capital, by becoming Christians yourselves and by using the philosophy of Christianity in all your dealings"—in so many words you might put his message to the institution of capitalism and its members.

"Don't criticise the Church for not helping you," he would say to labour. "Come into the church and make it strong enough to help you."

"Don't criticise the Church for not getting the viewpoint of capital," he would say to the capitalists. "Make yourselves worthy and acceptable members of the Church, look at capitalism through the eyes of Christians, and then the Church may have an opportunity to understand your viewpoint."

A missionary to American institutions—that's what I found Bishop McConnell to be. As an onlooker I took it as a significant fact that the Church had found a niche of great importance and power for a man of Bishop McConnell's purposes and aims.

IX

BISHOP FRANCIS J. McCONNELL

WHEREVER you went in Mexico in the days I was there, whether you were a business man, a miner or a newspaper correspondent, you heard men ask, "Have you ever met McConnell? He'll tell you all about Mexico."

In many different towns in Mexico and in the several clubs in Mexican towns where American men gather I heard McConnell's name.

"Who is McConnell?" I asked one old timer.

"Why, he's the Methodist Bishop of Mexico," he replied. "He travels over the place more than any business man I know and he gets more inside information about local conditions everywhere than any other American. He knows about the Mexican people and what they're thinking."

This writer was never lively enough to catch up with the bishop whom everyone called by his last name, without any title, in the wide, sparse land of Mexico. Traveling was difficult; trains were blown up now and then; bridges were

burned down. Now and then some American coming into the American club in Mexico City from some faraway corner of the land would tell of having seen McConnell in his parts, recently. Everything you heard about Bishop McConnell was to the effect that he was on the move. *How* he moved, I never could discover. But through all the wildest days in Mexico—when Madero was unseated and Pancho Villa was running amok—this Methodist Bishop got around from church to church somehow, bracing up his Mexican Methodist clergymen and hoping, with them, for happier days in their upset land, and advising the thirty or more American clergymen in the larger cities and towns. He was being a bishop in every sense of the word, no matter how topsy-turvy things might go.

The Methodist Episcopal Church did not go topsy-turvy in Mexico, in those days. Bishop McConnell—I've caught up with him at last since then and had more than one long talk with him—does not believe in the Church *ever* going topsy-turvy, in spite of how the rest of the world may go.

I heard one thing about Bishop McConnell in Mexico, in those days, that aroused my curiosity about the man.

Old timers—Americans who had been in business in Mexico for many years—told me

that whenever a Methodist minister in Mexico declared himself in favour of American intervention, Bishop McConnell sent that clergyman back home to the United States.

In other words, the Methodist Episcopal Bishop in Mexico was a non-interventionist and he not only talked non-intervention but he acted it. Some Americans in Mexico liked this; others didn't.

But the point that you noted was this: No matter what folks thought about him, Bishop McConnell wasn't afraid of public opinion; he wasn't afraid to put his Church, out-and-out, on a platform that everyone could understand. While Bishop McConnell was in Mexico the Methodist Episcopal Church was a friend of the Mexican people—and the Mexican people knew it.

You heard other things about "McConnell"; they all went to prove that, whatever else he might be, he was not afraid of men or things. And it takes that kind of a man to do things in a land like Mexico, whether he's mining or drilling for oil or being a bishop.

A thousand miles from Mexico I finally came across Bishop Francis McConnell for the first time. He was on the famous Boardwalk at Atlantic City.

His face was smooth-shaven; his hair iron-

grey. The cut of his clothes was good and he might have passed as a successful man of business in any club in America. Then he was in his forties; today he is only fifty-two.

He outspoke me in Spanish in a minute. When I told him how I had tried to catch up with him in Mexico he smiled and said, "Well, I had to move around a great deal in those days."

We talked Mexico for half an hour. It was easy to see that he was a man who would always know and understand fully every job that came to his hand.

I had talked to hundreds of business men in Mexico who knew much about Mexico. But, in speaking with Bishop McConnell, I discovered a new viewpoint. The business men knew Mexico, but Bishop McConnell knew the Mexican people. And what made him most different from most of my informants was that he not only knew the Mexican people but he loved them. He thought of them as human beings; some of them as fellow Methodists.

He looked at Mexico and the Mexican problem through the eyes of a Christian. He saw the rights of the Mexican people. And that was what he had been fighting for in Mexico. When he had sent a clergyman home to the United States it was because he felt that the

clergyman was not seeing Mexico through Christian eyes.

"We ought to Christianise our international relations; put the paganism out of them." That was the belief on which Bishop McConnell acted in Mexico.

There were more important things to talk about that day on the Boardwalk—more up-to-date things—though I didn't know about it at the time. I discovered it, however, the next morning, in the newspapers.

McConnell, the Bishop from Mexico, was on the front pages in big headlines.

A great gathering of churchmen of all denominations had brought the young bishop to Atlantic City.

Throughout the Eastern States a great strike was under way in the steel factories. Readers of newspapers had tremendous difficulty in discovering what it was all about; it was hard for the public to get facts about either side in the gigantic dispute.

The churchmen in Atlantic City appointed a committee to investigate the strike. And Bishop McConnell was made the head of this committee.

The newspapers told the story on the morning I mention. Bishop McConnell had plunged into his job of investigation with all

his might; his committee had followed him bravely.

And the committee reported that one probable cause of the strike was that thousands of men were forced to work in the steel mills seven days a week and twelve hours a day. This was news to the American public.

What's more, the committee didn't believe it was right for any American business man or any American corporations to force human beings to toil like this. It took from such oppressed men all chance to worship; it took from them all faith in God and man.

Bishop McConnell wanted the churches to go to the rescue of the overworked men in the steel mills. It was the same brave voice that he raised in Mexico. He wanted to show the people that the church would be their friend in the every day trials of their lives; in their fight for bread and butter.

That was four years ago.

Since then a President of the United States, speaking in the White House to a group of steel manufacturers, helped them to find a way to wipe the seven-day week and the twelve-hour day out of American industrial life. He said it was a shame to have men work like that in America.

And still later—too late for Warren G.

Harding to be present in this world—the great steel manufacturers announced, with honest and evident pleasure and pride, that they had found a way to abolish the long day and the long week.

I'm not saying that it was the report of Bishop McConnell's committee that brought this action about, though it helped.

I'm only telling the story to indicate two facts about Bishop Francis J. McConnell. One is that he is not afraid of criticism. The other is that he believes in using the church to help downtrodden people wherever he finds them.

"Industry ought to be Christianised," he told me, as we talked about the steel committee report in Brooklyn recently.

That's the key to the man; he wants everything Christianised.

In talking with these eminent clergymen of many Protestant creeds, I have, as a layman, been astonished at their variety, and the variety of their aims. It is remarkable how many different kinds of jobs the Churches of America have for their leaders to do; necessary jobs that must be done, if the Church is to hold its own in American life. I find, in fact, that every leader is doing something a little different from any other leader; filling his own niche and no other's. Perhaps that's what makes them leaders.

This is markedly the case with Bishop Francis J. McConnell. Like other leaders I have met—John Roach Straton, David James Burrell, Harry Emerson Fosdick—he has his own individual niche in American Protestantism; he has found his kind of a job to do, and is doing it.

I'll have to go to the sea, to a warship, to get a picture that will illustrate Bishop McConnell, as an onlooker might see him.

On every battleship there are men whose jobs have nothing to do with fighting, except indirectly. They care for the great furnaces and see that they are fed with oil. They watch the machinery and keep it operating perfectly. They keep the ship clean and sanitary. They keep it ready for *use* at the drop of a hat.

There's another man on shipboard who has another duty than theirs. His duty is to *use* the ship, when occasion requires. He doesn't stoke; he doesn't clean machinery.

He uses the ship as an instrument.

You find before talking very long with Bishop McConnell that his particular job, as he sees it, is to *use* the Church as an instrument.

He takes it for granted that the Church is not badly out of order; that, as an institution, it is in working shape. Anyhow there are men and

women in the Church, millions of them, who will keep it going.

What he sees is the need of using this instrument out in the world of affairs. That was what he was trying to do in Mexico; what he was trying to do in connection with the steel strike.

You lose a sense of the importance of your own particular soul when you talk with Bishop McConnell.

I imagine that the two opposites in American Protestantism are "Billy" Sunday and Bishop McConnell. Your own individual soul and its welfare—how to set it straight and keep it going so—is the matter that you would discuss with Billy Sunday. The approach of Bishop McConnell would be different.

"The people of the world need a friend," he would tell you. "Never mind your own worries. Come on out into the world with me and let's help the underdogs. Here's the Church of Christ. Let's make it our tool and instrument. Whenever we see any one in trouble we will use the power of the Church to help him and prove to him that the Church, like Christ, is his friend."

He looks out from his place, this bishop, like a man in a watchtower onto a stormy sea, seeking for people in distress. He knows that his

boat—the Church—can help them. He will not be worried, if he puts out on the waves, about his own welfare in the boat or the welfare of those who are helping him; he will not be worrying about whether the boat will stand the storm. He knows it will. But he will be worrying about the welfare of those he has started out to aid.

To the man on the street, outside of the Church, Bishop McConnell is one of the most striking and interesting figures in Protestantism. This perhaps, for one reason, is because, in his mind and feelings, he is out on the street himself.

The man on the street in America understands the evangelism of Billy Sunday very clearly; it is a personal evangelism.

By the same token I believe that the man on the street in America who knows Bishop McConnell can understand him clearly; perhaps better than can some of the members of the churches who emphasise individuality in religion.

I can imagine Bishop McConnell on a platform like Billy Sunday. But his audience would be different. In that audience would sit not men and women, worried about the welfare of their individual souls. Grouped before him, if he could have his way, would be the gigantic

distorted figures of all the great institutions which humanity has created in its social relations or which have grown up in modern civilisation.

Before him would sit the figure of Education, with its irresistible power over men and women. In his audience there would sit the figure of International Relations, creases of hate and jealousy and envy lining its face. There would sit Industry and Finance and Labour. Here would sit Politics, two-faced and sneaking.

Here would be the Stage and Art and Literature; the institutions of Home, Patriotism, Music.

The figure of every activity that men know would be in that audience.

"I have brought you here," this Bishop would say, "to tell you that while men and women are being Christianised in the world today, you, as institutions, are not being Christianised. So far as you, as institutions of mankind are concerned, Christ might never have been born. There is paganism in you. You *are* pagan. You, Education, care for the minds of children but not for their souls. You, Industry, and Finance, are greedy. You, Labour, need education and understanding. You, Drama, sometimes degrade men. You, Art,

and you, Literature, often do the same. You, Patriotism, need some of Christ's love for the other fellow."

It is to have these institutions of men, which guide and direct the lives of us all, "hit the saw-dust trail" that Bishop McConnell is working.

He'd have them apologise to humanity in all lands for the evils they have worked on men and women. And he'd have them "sign the card" promising to try to follow Christ throughout the rest of eternity.

In my latest talk with Bishop McConnell we sat in the great assembly hall of a Brooklyn church, where the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church from all over the world had been in session. Flags decorated the walls; a vase of flowers stood on every desk; behind every desk was a great easy chair. On every desk was a small frame, bearing, in black letters, the name of the bishop who, during the sessions, sat in that seat. The session, which had closed for the day, had been secret. In the hallway, outside, a dozen New York newspaper reporters were cornering every bishop, as he left the room, to ask about the news of the meeting. Here was a bishop just come from Russia; another from Germany, one from Mexico and others from other corners of the earth.

"What had the bishops done about dancing?" I heard one reporter ask.

"What had the bishops done about sending money to the Russian church?" asked another.

On a seat inside the hall we talked for an hour—long after all the other bishops had gone.

"What a power!" said Bishop McConnell, as he waved a hand toward the array of empty seats. "What a power, if we only learn how to use it!

"The Church is an instrument to do things with; to do things that the world needs done. It is the greatest power in the world, if we only use it.

"The whole world needs the help of this power today. It's a power that can end war and put an end to international hatreds. In the next war I want to see the Church of the world arise and say to statesmen: 'Stop! Don't you dare to declare war among mankind. Men and women are doing their best everywhere to lead fine, decent, clean lives and thus put the world ahead and you shall not steer them into hatred!'

"The Church has that power and I think some day it may find itself able to use it. The Church is *not* like other institutions. They are human institutions. The Church is a Divine institution. I'm not a pacifist but I don't be-

lieve that the state ever ought to draw Christ's Church into the support of war anywhere in the world again.

"I believe in making the Church as a Divine institution the aggressive defender of all down-trodden men and women in all walks of life, and in all countries. They ought to be able to turn to the Church and seek assistance against oppression and injustice.

"And the Church—well, it ought to Christianise all human institutions so that they will not oppress men and women.

"The institutions of men can be Christianised and this will not be a Christian world or a Christian era until institutions, as well as men and women, are Christianised."

It was fortunate I had that group of empty seats before me to strengthen the picture he drew of the vastness of the potential power of the Church; here, before me, were signs of the world activities of only one Protestant denomination of one nation. It was hard to picture the potential massed power which might lie in all the Protestant denominations—and others, too—in all lands.

Bishop McConnell sees this power; he wants to use it.

He believes that if the Churches can bring the institutions of men to the mourner's bench and

Christianise them and put love and kindness into them and take out the hate and greed, that we will have a new kind of world very shortly, with fewer underdogs and more happy people in it.

From what I had heard of "McConnell" in the clubs of Mexico, I had expected to find a rough-and-ready man, self-made, perhaps. I found him far different, pronouncedly a student and a scholar.

"No," Bishop McConnell told me smiling, "I haven't any story of early hardships in my life. I didn't have to work my way through school, though my father was a Methodist clergyman in Ohio, when I was born. I borrowed the money from my mother to go through Ohio Wesleyan University but I paid her back later on. Somehow, we always had just about enough money to get along on, even if it was a clergyman's home. I think I always knew I was going to go into the ministry. I never had any doubts about it. I went to school for that purpose and when I graduated I went into the pulpit immediately."

He had four charges in Massachusetts towns, the last, in that state, being at Cambridge, where he preached to many Harvard students.

While he was filling the pulpit of the famous New York Avenue Methodist church in Brook-

lyn, Francis McConnell was elected president of De Pauw University. He was then only thirty-eight years old.

It was his election as a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1912, at the age of forty-one, that took him out of the presidency of De Pauw. Today, in his eleventh year as a bishop, he is serving in the Pittsburgh district, where questions between capital and labour are acute.

Did I find a radical in Bishop McConnell?

I did not. To my astonishment he demands that capital and labour both help and permit the Church to be Christ-like in dealing with the problems between capital and labour. He asks aid for the Church from them!

He suggests that capital and labour turn Christian.

And has this bishop any hope of success in trying to move selfishness and meanness and greed and cruelty out of the institutions of men?

"It can be done," he told me simply. "It can be easily done. You know that people who are trying to do the same thing in life, who have a common object, are always friends. A man and wife may love each other but they love each other more deeply and surely when they are both interested in the common task of raising

their children. Married couples who do not have children are in danger, unless they find some common outside interest. Two men or two women can't just say to each other, 'Let's you and me be friends for life.' Friendship doesn't come that way. It comes through two persons being interested in common in some outside object. It is devotion to common tasks that makes fellowship between men and women.

"All I ask is that America, its men and women and its institutions, all join in common in trying to be Christlike and in helping churches of America to be Christlike.

"It's by working with each other and by working with God at this common task that we can bring the world to Christ."

And then he added: "You know people who 'talk shop' are always the best of friends. We want America—all of it—to 'talk shop'; and we want 'shop' to be religion and an understanding of a Christlike God."

X

RUSSELL H. CONWELL

AMERICA'S AMAZING MAN

I HAVE never heard more scathing criticism of mediocre preaching in American pulpits than in my conversation with Russell H. Conwell. In all fairness to this distinguished clergyman I must say, however, that he made no remarks in our conversation criticising present-day preaching; at least, that was not the purpose of his remarks. However, in talks both with him and with Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, I discovered that there exists among great churchmen a knowledge that at least a certain portion of the preaching in American pulpits lacks merit in many different directions. Mentality, thought and good hard work is often missing.

It was not until fairly late in life that Russell H. Conwell went into the ministry. When I asked him the reason, he told me that the pulpit held no attractions for him because of the nature of the preaching which he usually heard. It was weak and unattractive; sermons were careless and full of faults. In fact, I gained the impression that no intellectual person could have a greater disdain for mediocrity in the pulpit than Dr. Conwell. It was this mediocrity, he told me, that had stood in his way whenever he had considered entering the ministry.

X

RUSSELL H. CONWELL

I WENT into a sick room to see him. It was a gray, winter day; through the window I saw the cold, winter Atlantic. I found him a huge bulk of a man. He seemed to have lost weight, for I noticed that his vest seemed a little too large and his coat hung loosely. I caught a tired look, just for a minute, in his eyes.

And then in one minute, after a handshake—my biggish hand was lost in his—the sunshine was turned on. He smiled—and I was under the charm of Russell H. Conwell. It is a charm that has held millions of men and women in our land.

He was not too old, even with his eighty-one years, or too weak in his convalescence, to be himself. And there is not a more amazing man in America than he. Five different famous writers have tried to write biographies about him and his astonishing life; he has always done more astonishing things, after the biographies were written, than he had done before,

thus making the books look like unfinished documents.

There's no use, in this article, of my trying to tell all he has done. You can find several books about him on the shelves of your public library. None of them is up to date; none, for instance, tells of his having received the annual award, in 1923, in Philadelphia, as a citizen who, during the year, had done the most for the city; none tells of the hospitals he has established since he was seventy-five years old.

Right away, in talking with this man, you discover that life is no problem at all, if you can see it and live it as he has. There are no money worries, there are no questions of enmities, there are no meannesses; there is nothing but sunshine and helpfulness.

He's in touch with Something that gives him power not only to live his own life happily and easily, but also to help hundreds and thousands of other human beings to live theirs. He makes you ashamed of ever having felt that there was anything hard or cruel about life.

I don't believe that a thing has ever happened to this fine old man that he cannot smile about. Several million Americans who have heard his famous lecture, "Acres of Diamonds," will believe me when I say this.

As he talked I had a picture back in my mind.

It was night-time on the battlefield of Kenesaw Mountain. A huge hulk of a twenty-year-old boy captain lay on the ground. A stretcher-bearer, seeking for wounded, bent down to try to hear heart-beats. "He's gone!" said the bearer; "his chest is blown open." They went away and left that pile of bleeding flesh in the darkness. You wouldn't have thought that the world could expect anything more from that heap of misery. There it lay through the night.

Up in a little town in Massachusetts a devout father and mother had been praying for this boy through all the months of fighting. He had run away from home twice. Finding his way to Yale University, he had worked in kitchens, and wherever else he could find odd jobs, to pay for his tuition. He had become very "wise," as youth becomes. The university had knocked all his religion into a cocked hat; he was registered as an "atheist." And this looked like the end—this bleeding body on the battlefield.

But there was life in that body. It was motionless with weakness, but in the brain a mighty parade of thought was passing. All that his father and mother had taught him of religion and God came back to him.

This big, smiling man who was talking to me had been that motionless mound of misery.

"I was converted there that night, waiting

for some one to come and pick me up," he told me. And he laughed with a glee that came from the heart.

"The next morning, when some one found I was alive and took me to the hospital, I called for a chaplain and told him that, from then on, I was going to be a Christian."

What came out of that bleeding boy on that battlefield that night? For one thing, the great Temple University of Philadelphia; for another, three great hospitals; education for hundreds of young men and women, to which object, it is estimated, Dr. Conwell has donated more than $8,000,000 earned in lecturing.

I had come to find out how Russell H. Conwell had entered the ministry.

"I didn't want to be a clergyman," he told me. "My father and mother had always told folks that I would go into the ministry sometime, but I had decided I wouldn't. I didn't like parsons. I didn't like the way they had preached and shouted and ranted. I had an idea, also, that it was a pretty poor way to make a living.

"Well, after the Civil War I went out to Minneapolis. I went into business there and made money. I had a fine law practice; I did a big real estate business. I established the

Minneapolis *Tribune* and, with my left hand, I founded the Minneapolis Y. M. C. A. But I didn't want to preach or to be a preacher."

Conwell was only twenty-two years old then. He proved himself a master at business and a moneymaker. The ministry looked a long way off. Life was too pleasant and too easy. The governor of Minnesota sent him to Germany to be immigration agent for that state.

" ' Don't let a single German immigrant start for Minnesota who gets drunk,' was one of my orders from the governor," Dr. Conwell told me with a huge laugh. " Well, the truth was that, in four years in Germany, I didn't see a single immigrant who could have been disbarred from Minnesota for that reason."

This job in Germany made the ministry seem even farther away.

And then came still a better position for the young man—that of a traveling newspaper correspondent. I've been one myself, and if any young man can find a more thrilling occupation than that I have never heard of it. He traveled throughout the world for the New York *Tribune*. A good-sized weekly check came regularly, with expense money; his articles brought him reputation and fame in the newspaper world. This was a long, long way from being a clergyman.

"And then I went to Boston to be managing editor of a famous newspaper," he told me; "I was put in charge of the old Boston *Traveler*. I loved newspaper work."

But he could not stay out of the law. The money began to pour in as soon as he opened his law office. He began, also, to buy and sell real estate.

He was then thirty-six years old; that's pretty late in life for a man to choose the ministry as his life calling.

"And how did you come to drop your business and go into the ministry?" I asked.

"It all happened one forenoon," he said with a hearty laugh. I cannot attempt to give my readers the charm of the story which this man told me within the next half hour. I do not know whether he has ever told it in any of his lectures. He smiled or laughed at every sentence, as if it were all a new and marvelous story—a thing that had just happened.

"It was like this," he said. "Some men came into my real estate office in Boston one day to see me. They were members of a little, run-down Baptist church at Lexington, Massachusetts, where the battle of Lexington was fought in the Revolutionary War. They wanted me to sell their church; it had gone to pieces. But there was one difficulty. Some of

the folks in the little congregation were opposing the sale; they wanted to hang on, if they could. These men wanted me, as a real estate expert, to come out to the church and tell the folks who were holding back that it would be advisable to sell.

"Well, the next Sunday I went to the little church in Lexington. There wasn't any preacher, so I got up in the pulpit before the seventeen people and tried to get them to agree on whether the church would be sold. They couldn't agree. All of a sudden I found myself taking sides with the people who didn't want to sell.

"'Well, you all come here next Sunday, and we'll have a service of some sort,' I said. 'If there's no one here to preach a sermon, I'll try to do it.'

"There were thirty people there the next Sunday, and I preached. It was my first sermon. The floor was so worn out that there were places where the congregation didn't dare to step, for fear of falling through into the cellar. The front steps were so rickety that they were dangerous.

"After my sermon I said to the congregation, 'There will be services in this church next Sunday morning, as usual.'

"Monday morning I didn't go to business.

Instead, I got some nails and lumber and a hammer and a saw, and went to the church to fix the front steps.

"I was a stranger in Lexington. My home was twenty miles away. One of the leading citizens of the town, a noted Unitarian, passed the church while I was tinkering away at the steps. He stopped and watched me for a minute. Finally he said: 'Good morning, friend. What are you doing there?'

"'Oh, I'm going to fix up the church.'

"'What are you planning to do to it?' he asked.

"'Well,' I said, 'I'm starting on the steps. They're pretty shaky. When I get through here I'm going to lay a new floor inside. The old floor is pretty dangerous.' I was half-joking, but still I think I must have meant it.

"'Why, that old building isn't worth tinkering with,' said the man.

"'It's the best we've got,' I said, 'and we'll have to get along with it.'

"The man walked on a few steps, and I went on hammering. He went only a short distance and then he turned around and came back.

"'Are you really going to fix up that old church?' he asked me.

"'Yes, I am,' I said. 'At least, I'm going to do the best I can with it.'

"He reached into his pocket and pulled out a bill. 'Here,' he said, 'use this as far as it will go. I'm Unitarian, but good luck to you!'

"I thanked him and stuck the bill in my pocket and told him I would buy flooring with it, and went on with my work.

"After a while the postmaster came by. I didn't know him, of course, and he didn't know me. He stopped and asked me what I was doing. I told him what I had told the first man.

"'But you can't keep that old Baptist church alive,' he told me. 'This is a Unitarian town. The Baptists have all died out.'

"'No, they haven't,' I told him. 'I found seventeen of them here. And, besides, a Unitarian gave me a hundred dollars this morning to buy new flooring.'

"'What Unitarian gave you a hundred dollars?' he asked.

"I told him.

"'Well, that surprises me,' said the postmaster. 'He's the firmest Unitarian in this town.'

"'Don't make any difference,' I said. 'He gave me a hundred dollars, and here's the bill in my pocket.' I pulled it out and showed it to him.

"'Well, I declare,' he said. 'If that fellow was willing to give you a hundred dollars, I'll

give you the same. Are you the lawyer from Boston that preached here last Sunday?'

"I said I was. 'All right! Here's your hundred dollars,' he said. And he gave me the money. I stuck it in my pocket and thanked him, and went on working."

Right here the big man burst into a hearty laugh.

"That morning's work resulted in collecting four thousand five hundred dollars for that church. We got it fixed up, and finally we built a fine, stone church. It's running yet.

"It looked as if I would have to be the pastor of the church; so I closed up my law office in Boston, dropped the real estate business and was ordained a Baptist minister. That's how I went into the ministry."

Dr. Conwell remained in the Lexington church until it was on its feet. After that he didn't seem to be needed.

Not being needed, I imagine, has been the one and only fear of his life.

In that little church in Lexington his salary hadn't supported him; he had been worse off than the preachers who lived on pittance salaries; he had been forced to live on money which he had saved.

He had about fifty-five thousand dollars left when he heard of a little Baptist church in

Philadelphia that needed help mightily. The building consisted only of a basement.

He went to Philadelphia, took charge of the Grace Baptist church, put a considerable portion of his fifty-five thousand dollars into it, collected more, and, within a few years, he had raised the largest Protestant church of its day in the United States—the famous Baptist Temple, with seats for three thousand five hundred.

His church was always filled. He was there every Sunday. Between times he was lecturing. He has given his famous lecture, "Acres of Diamonds," over six thousand times. He has never taken one cent of the proceeds for himself. After deducting traveling expenses, he sends a check for the remainder to some college president or, perhaps, directly to some student, to help pay for an education.

Possibly Dr. Conwell knows how many hundreds of young men and young women he has helped through American universities, though I imagine he doesn't. Of the eight million and more dollars which he has taken in and given away, a considerable portion has gone for the education of young people in various universities.

It's *acting* Christianity, not *talking* it, that counts with this man. When he does talk, in his pulpit or on the lecture platform, he is only

telling people how to *act* Christianity; he's only telling them that *talking* doesn't count.

You and I have been told, many times, from many pulpits, to *act* like Christians. But this, to me, has always been a puzzling generality, too vague and indefinite for concrete results.

Dr. Conwell can tell you how to *act* like a Christian; his instructions are very definite:

"Find the nearest person who needs your help and give it to him right away, in the name of Christ."

Here's how the great Temple University, through which over one hundred and twenty-five thousand students have passed, was started by Dr. Conwell:

A young man came to Dr. Conwell and asked him where he could study, of evenings, for the ministry. Dr. Conwell knew of no school that could meet this need.

"Come to me next Saturday evening and we'll begin lessons," he told the young man. "We'll fix things up some way."

Saturday evening the young man came with two other young men who wanted to study, of evenings, for the ministry. Within a few weeks the group had grown to a dozen. Dr. Conwell secured a classroom. The class grew until daily sessions became necessary. Pretty soon a building went up to house the classes.

Today there are about ten thousand students in the various courses.

And the three hospitals Dr. Conwell has founded—they started simply like all of the other mighty projects of this simple man.

A member of his congregation was ill and needed a nurse. Dr. Conwell rented a few rooms, put the patient there, with a nurse, and then put more patients into the cramped quarters, as needy cases came to his attention. After a time he needed more room for his sick friends among the poor. So the great Samaritan Hospital, of Philadelphia, was founded, and also the Garretson Hospital.

Now a third hospital of his founding is under way. It will be known as the Greatheart Hospital, named after the character in Pilgrim's Progress. It will be for women and children.

At eighty-one I found him full of plans for seeing it running at full blast.

Between times Dr. Conwell has written books —twenty or more of them. He has written biographies of some of his heroes—Garfield, Bayard Taylor and Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

At eighty-one I found him between sermons and lectures, writing a biography of John Wanamaker.

Life is simple when you love everybody, as this man does. As you talk to him you feel

that, if there's no more sunshine in Heaven than there has been for him here, he will not be disappointed; he'll tell you that a life filled with love will be filled with as much happiness as a human being can stand.

Did you ever stop to think what a wonderful place this world would be if tomorrow morning every last man and woman of us were to roll up sleeves and start out to fight for the other fellow; to see that the other fellow got all that was coming to him, and even more?

If we could only forget ourselves and turn "self-ishness" into "you-ishness" we could make another place of our world. We've all thought this; I have. But I've always found a stumbling block.

"Who would start it? And what would happen to him, if he started it and the rest of the folks didn't? He'd lose everything he had and starve to death."

I was wrong there. I made that discovery in that sick room beside the dreary ocean that gray, winter day.

Russell H. Conwell is a man who has lived this way all his life.

He hasn't a million dollars; in fact, I understand he hasn't *any* dollars; rarely more than one hundred. But he can look you straight in the face and say, "I have thousands and thou-

sands of friends, and not one single enemy in all the world."

And all this started, simply, in that pitiful heap of a wounded Union soldier, at Kenesaw Mountain—there, and back in a home of prayer in New England.

XI

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

A KNIGHT FIGHTING FOR THE BIBLE

IT would be useless for me to try to tell what kind of a preacher G. Campbell Morgan is. He has conquered the Protestantism of Great Britain and America. The two great capitals of London and New York are his, so that when he preaches in either city the crowds that go to hear are too great for any church auditorium. He is beyond any denomination.

A great compelling English-speaking Protestant preacher; that's what I make out of him; a preacher too big in his views to be enclosed within any ecclesiastical fence.

But how did he come to *be* this kind of a preacher? I'm asking this question about him just as I might ask a similar question about any man who has reached success in his profession—a great banker, a great builder, a great surgeon. What were the things he did or the things that happened to him that took him to the heights? What is in him that makes him different? What is the origin of his power?

XI

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

WHAT kind of a man is behind the preacher; that's what I wanted to know about G. Campbell Morgan.

It was raining in Baltimore that Sunday afternoon; what with the rain and the damp of the ocean the fish of Chesapeake Bay might almost have swum in the air about the tops of the automobiles and busses. You had to look through what seemed to be almost solid water to see the outlines of the buildings. It was unspeakably dreary.

It was all right for me. I was lodged in a huge chair in the marble lobby of the great Belvidere Hotel, with a good book. Whenever the revolving door at the entrance made a stir most of us in the lobby looked up from what we were reading to look at the latest drenched newcomers. The liveried doormen, in heavy, white rubber raincoats, took dripping umbrellas and set them in the rack, and liveried bellboys and porters seized the baggage of dripping newcomers and helped them to take off their

dripping coats. If there is a lonelier spot in all this world than a hotel lobby on a Sunday afternoon I've never seen it and I don't want to see it. They are always rayless places.

I was waiting for the great preacher, G. Campbell Morgan. The town of Baltimore was talking about him; there were stories in the Sunday morning papers about him. He had come to town to preach twice a day for two weeks. Various churches of the town were adjusting their schedules of services to suit the Morgan program. This rainy afternoon he was preaching to a vast audience, but I sat at the hotel waiting. I hadn't come to Baltimore to hear a preacher but to talk to a man.

So I sat there in the lobby, reading and watching the revolving door that led out into the rain. Finally, a great car rolled up. The doorman hurried out to the curb carrying his huge umbrella. He opened the car door and out into the wetness stepped a tall gaunt Englishman. You couldn't have missed his Englishness. As he came through the revolving door I noted it—the narrow prominent nose, the long neck, the low, loose collar and the shaggy brows. In an instant I knew him for the great Morgan. The porters knew him, too; he lived there. One of them tried to take his overcoat.

I met him at the clerk's desk, where I heard him asking for me.

"I'm soaking wet," he said, laughing lightly. "It's not the rain but I'm always wet with perspiration after I preach. Let's have some tea. I'm an Englishman, you know." He laughed again. I was to find that he's nearly always laughing or smiling; that he believes life, whether it's lived in England or America, in small homes or amid the excitement and luxury of travel, is a very pleasant and worthwhile thing. It was with a charming smile, not devoid of pride, that he presented me to his daughter, who is his almost constant companion these days. She spoke with the soft accent of a Southern schoolgirl. Her home, for several years, has been in Athens, Georgia. America has not permitted Morgan to return to England for the past five years! It may never permit him to return home.

But Miss Morgan is English, too. What came next proved it. I have lived in England and I know.

"Tea, please," Dr. Morgan said to the waiter in the luxurious dining room. "Do you have yours strong?" he asked me. "Mild, please," I answered. He smiled. "Put one bag of tea in his pot and two in ours," he ordered.

Three small pots of tea the waiter brought. The Morgan pots were double strength. I poured hot water in mine, but the cup of tea which the great preacher raised to his lips threw off a thick rich vapour of tannin—the very smell of London.

"There! That's better," he said, after a deep draught. I noticed that he still wore his overcoat, though the check boy at the door had captured mine. Dr. Morgan shrugged his shoulders in his coat and said, "There! That will take care of the dampness. And now what can I tell you?"

"I came to ask you," I said, "how you happened to be a preacher? What started you in that direction?"

"To this day," he said, snapping off his words, decisively, and waving his head, "I don't know. I don't know. I *always* knew I was going to be a preacher."

"But," I said, "most people can point out some certain incident, some certain moment, that sent them in any certain direction."

"Yes, I know," he said. "I can find most of the big points in my life, but I can't point to anything that directed me to the ministry. I always knew I was going to preach."

"Can you remember your first sermon?" I asked.

"Why, yes, of course. I was thirteen years of age. I preached in a Wesleyan schoolroom. You know in England laymen preach in little chapels or in cottage meetings. My father was a Baptist minister and when I was thirteen years old I preached my first lay sermon."

He stopped to drink tea. Then he turned to Miss Morgan.

"But I had had practice before that," he said, with a broad smile. "I can remember preaching when I was six years old. I used to make my sister's dolls sit in meeting and listen to me preach.

"You see," he said, turning to me, "I always knew I was going to preach. And it was the same way with my conversion. I know I have been converted, but I don't know when. I was born again, but conversion must have come to me before I was entirely self-conscious, before I fully realised that there was such a person as myself.

"Of course my home surroundings were extremely religious. Why, I never knew"—and again he waved his head from side to side, with each word—"a more austere or Puritanical man than my father. He wouldn't permit Shakespeare in the home; he never read a novel in his life. They were of the theatre and of the world.

"The Bible was the book in our home; prayer and hymns and discussion of the Bible was part of our daily life. Indeed," he said, "religion was the life of the household; every minute and every act was regulated by it."

And George Morgan went to school at home; he didn't get out into the big world by going to school with the boys and girls of the little town of Tetbury, in the Cotswold hills of Gloucestershire, where he was born. A teacher, carefully selected by the austere father, came to the home; whatever religious instruction the boy did not receive from his parents he received from this tutor.

"I wasn't strong and healthy," Dr. Morgan told me, "so I studied at home."

Again he told me how indescribably strict his father had been with him. And he didn't speak of this strictness quite approvingly, either. Instead, he explained it to me.

In the England of the Morgans you know your ancestors: family life doesn't go by persons and individuals; it goes by generations.

In the Morgan family, when George Morgan's father was born, it was time for somebody to be strict. The family was not a rich one but it was an old one, as all families of those parts were. And the Morgan family was on the down grade.

Dr. Morgan spoke to Miss Morgan as well as to me, when he told of the family fortunes.

"My great grandfather was a yeoman farmer," he said. "Do you know what a yeoman farmer means? It means one who is not a tenant but one who owns his own farm. It was a good farm, too. But his son drank up the farm—literally drank it up. He was my grandfather. He became a shepherd on the land which he had once owned.

"I loved my grandfather, though. We all did. Everybody loved him; there were some fine things about him. But things went hard for my father; from a boy of eight he was tossed out and had to make his own way.

"He had the choice of going his father's direction or going the other way. And he went the other way, just as earnestly as his father had gone his own way. It was a careful, God-fearing home my father wanted and he had it. That was the atmosphere in which I was raised."

You can almost feel sorry, even yet, for that hard-studying little Morgan boy, in that strict Puritanical home, shut off from the big outside world, playing church with the dolls. But that's the way *men* are made. Big men of any kind, in any profession, may be made of ordinary human material, but they must be cast in

special molds, under great heat and high pressure. Morgan's father, true to his lights, was getting ready to give something to the world. In plenty of time the big outside world would take the boy.

"I was trained to be a teacher," Dr. Morgan told me, "but as soon as I did go out to take the head mastership of a very rich Jewish collegiate school I lost my faith.

"I spent two miserable years. I lost everything. I was utterly bewildered and distracted. I couldn't get heads or tails of life."

The word "agnostic" had just been coined. I shall tell later on in this chapter of its influence on Morgan's life. The idea was seeping through the schools that men couldn't know religious truths with scientific exactness; Darwinism was new and fresh. Religion was rocking everywhere in the minds of school men, young and old, and it rocked and tottered in Morgan's mind.

"At last I made up my mind that the only hope for me was in the Bible," Dr. Morgan continued. "I made up my mind that I wasn't going to depend on what other people found in the Bible; I was going to find whatever was there for myself. What I got out of the Bible was going to be my own. And so I stopped reading books *about* the Bible and began to read

the Bible itself. I read it and read and read. I studied it, with infinite pains. As soon as I did this I saw the light again. I was back on the path.

"For seven years I didn't open a book that told about the Bible. My book was the Bible itself. I've studied that book all my life and I've only begun to discover what's in it."

Then Dr. Morgan began to preach. He was ordained in the Congregational church, though his family had been Baptist. Though his first charge was small, his fame reached great London within a few years. He did not have to wait long for the big outside world to call him. London wanted him.

The intellectuals were pounding away at the Rock of Ages; "higher criticism" was alarming the leaders of all the great denominations; they seemed helpless against it.

Into London sprang this tall, thin-faced, fighting man from the Cotswold farm country, to defend his Book. *Now* all those years of Puritanical training counted for something; *now* all his study of that Book stood him in good stead, like the long, slow, training of an athlete. He was like a knight in armour for the Bible. In the famous New Court chapel in London and in Westminster chapel, he met the

challenges of the intellectuals—and hurled challenges of his own.

"Religion is of the heart, not the brain," he cried, and then he used his own magnificent brain to prove it.

Of course America heard of him. While he was at the height of his fame in London he was brought to America during one summer. Dwight L. Moody took him to the Northfield Bible conference. Year after year, thereafter, he worked with Moody at Northfield.

"Forty-three times I've crossed the Atlantic," he told me. "I know America as well as I know England, I think."

And America knows G. Campbell Morgan as well as England does. Indeed, Morgan is a preacher of the entire English-speaking world. As a preacher he does not belong to any certain country any more than he definitely belongs to any certain creed.

It is a fact that there is not a preacher anywhere in the world who has a wider audience; I have not encountered any preacher who had a fame so nearly world-wide as his.

Where does his strength lie?

The secret of his power and success goes back to that one word "agnostic." A new kind of atheism got a start in the world just about the time that G. Campbell Morgan was beginning to

preach. It stirred him to action. The scientists in England had turned a broadside on old-fashioned religion. Of course there were plenty of "infidels" in the world at the time. These old-fashioned "infidels" were wont to sit back and say "There is no God." Their arguments were easy for even ordinary clergymen to attack. But the scientists were more subtle. They were very careful to make no declarations as to the existence of a God. They merely said, "We may not be able to prove that there is no God, but, on the other hand, no one can prove that there *is* a God. We don't know. We are agnostics." They spent little time in trying to prove or believe or even disbelieve anything. They tried to put religion at a standstill.

It became very fashionable in those days, in intellectual circles, to be an "agnostic." To take this pose was almost a mode among university students. "I don't know and no man can know"; that was the subtle declaration of the unbelievers of Morgan's early days.

"A man *can* know." That was G. Campbell Morgan's ringing declaration. He not only insisted that there was a God but that any man, by reading the Bible, could prove as definitely to himself that there is a God as any man could prove scientific facts to himself by reading scientific books.

"Agnosticism" as a fashion and a modish pose became extremely popular. It was discussed in the press of London as a popular subject; the word became almost a slang phrase.

It is one of the romances of the modern history of Protestantism, the early and even the present career of G. Campbell Morgan. His appearance in London created a sensation. He was an odd-looking, tall young man. He was cultured and brilliant. If he had come to London to enter the lists in the field of politics instead of religion he would certainly have made a brilliant mark. But he would have attracted no more attention than he did as a fighting preacher. There was no better-dressed man in London, I have been told by Londoners of his day. His hair was long and wavy. He loved flowers and often wore a flower in the lapel of his very correct coat. There was something dramatic about him. He was meeting the brilliant scientific and social minds of England on their own ground. He did not scorn to use their tools of beauty, literature, poetry and culture.

English society, I have been told, found a place for him, and kept it open, until it discovered that this striking young preacher from the provinces was not a poser who was dramatically

fighting the cultured scientists of his day, but that, in plain terms, he was in deadly earnest and that he had come to London to "stand up for God" and "for God's Book."

It was not play with G. Campbell Morgan, his assault on the "agnosticism" of his day; it was the hardest kind of work and of fighting.

Just about this time someone rediscovered the fact that Pontius Pilate had asked the question, "What is truth?" People who didn't know anything else about the Bible and couldn't quote anything from it were able glibly to quote Pontius Pilate. In this respect Pontius Pilate became, for a time, one of the leading and most important of all Biblical characters. It became the fashion in London universities and London drawing rooms to ask that question of Pilate's and then sit back and wait for the other fellow to answer it. It was supposed to be a flooring question. It was sort of a drawing-room game. If the other fellow couldn't answer the question "What is truth?" then you, as the asker, had forced him to prove that there was, indeed, no such thing as truth. Truth was an indefinite, unknowable thing; what might be true today would not be true tomorrow. Truth was too slippery and uncertain a thing, no matter how cultured an intellectual he might be, for any human being to try to grasp. If you were

really wise you didn't claim that any such thing as truth existed; you merely said: "I'm one of these new-style agnostics. I don't know and I'm smart enough to admit it."

It was into this intellectual game that G. Campbell Morgan plunged when he went to London. He became more than a popular preacher; he became the hero of great numbers of bewildered British folks who were trying to hold on to their religion in the midst of the storm.

He had nothing to stand on but the Bible. The amount of study and research he devoted to that was fabulous; he knew that Book down to its commas; he knew Bible times and their customs. None of his scientific enemies knew their books better than he knew his.

It was his championship of truth and of the Bible that prevented Morgan from becoming a pastor in the ordinary sense of the word. He has remained a preacher all his life. He made his own niche and found his own peculiar duties in the world of Protestantism.

The work that Morgan accomplishes today is stupendous. I saw a book containing his engagements for six months; his traveling, during that time, had taken him to preaching engagements in cities at opposite ends of the country and into Canada. During his stays of a week

or more in a city he preaches twice daily, sometimes seven days a week.

Twelve sermons a week, for weeks on end, has been an ordinary duty with him for many years.

As a writer his work is overwhelming. There are many famous popular writers who do not achieve the literary success with the best of their books that Morgan achieves with his. He has written over thirty books. Some of them, though written more than twenty years ago, have as steady a sale as any standard work of science. And many of his books are solid ones, too. They are text-books on the Bible and there is every indication that they will have as solid footing with coming generations as they have had with the people of Morgan's own day.

I have talked with great and famous pastors who have built great churches which they will leave behind them as their monuments.

Morgan's monument must find its pedestal in the hearts of men and women. He has held on to truth through a mighty storm when science was raging at its wildest. It is safe to say, with all reverence, that this man has played a great part in helping to keep the Bible anchored in the minds of the men and women of his time throughout the English-speaking world.

"What an agnostic he would have made!" an old London clergyman once exclaimed. "Thank God he wasn't one."

And now in writing of G. Campbell Morgan, I come to my last word. Often enough, in this book, I have said that I was a mere reporter, an unchurched man-on-the-street, doing my job as a writer, of interviewing and studying some of the great preachers of our day. I have gone about this task with an open mind, with no cause to support, no points to prove, no propaganda of any sort to devise and distribute.

It was inevitable that I should draw some conclusions about the Church, as an institution, from my contact with these Church leaders, and about the institution of the ministry. If now, after this experience with preachers, covering something more than a year, I were asked to preach about preachers, I would gladly take this powerful man, G. Campbell Morgan, as the subject of my text. I have more than a suspicion that I have not been entirely without a Guide in this past year's work. If I needed anything more to confirm my belief in the Help I have received than the ease and facility with which I have encountered these busy men, coming from all parts of the country and the pleasure and great satisfaction which I have experienced in

writing about them, it would be the fact that it was ordained that G. Campbell Morgan should be the last of the men I should interview.

The pity of it, that there should be so many creeds in the Protestant Church of America! I leave my task with that thought uppermost in my mind. I see the Protestant Church marred by as many creedal cracks as an old china plate.

True, the plate is whole. But I did not realise that fact until, after talking with clergymen of various denominations I came, at the end of my task, to G. Campbell Morgan. It was with bewilderment and great disappointment that I came to the day of meeting him. To me, until I encountered him, the Protestant Churches in America seemed almost a broken and hopeless mass of denominationalism.

But in Morgan I found a great Protestant preacher, a free lance within the realm of Protestantism. I found a man incredibly busy in speaking and writing to men and women of all Protestant denominations. I found that he has good welcome in all the Protestant denominations of America, Canada and England and when the great audiences assemble to hear him they are made up of folks who come, without urging, from the churches of all the Protestant denominations of the community.

To me, the wonder of the man is, that he

proves so clearly that anyone, even an outsider, can see it, how much the Protestant Churches and creeds have in common, in their fundamental beliefs, and how unnecessary it is to lace and interlace the surface of Protestantism with schisms.

If my son, in the year 1950, were to be asked, as a writer, to interview some of the great preachers of his day, as I have, will he meet fewer denominational preachers and more Protestant preachers than I have?

I believe he will; I believe that the creeds within Protestantism are more shell-like and fragile than appears on the surface. Some of these ministers I have written about in this book were born in one creed and preach now, in another.

Ask me at the end of my work what conclusion stands out in my mind and I must say, "I have found plenty of signs that the Protestant Churches of America will one day be one great Church. The uselessness and the pity of today's schisms and doctrinal conflicts will, of themselves, bring about a great consolidation, which our children, if not we ourselves, shall see."

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